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controversy"

M'GAVIN

ON

"THE END OF CONTROVERSY:"

BEING

STRICTURES ON DR. MILNER'S WORK IN SUPPORT OF POPISH ERRORS,

ENTITLED,

"THE END OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY."

By WILLIAM M'GAVIN, Esq.

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PREFACE.

The following strictures on the work of Dr. Milner, entitled "The End of Religious Controversy," were written by W. M'Gavin, Esq. and circulated by him, in 1822, in a weekly paper, which he then was engaged in publishing, against Popery. They are here reprinted, with permission, and without alteration, and with only some verbal corrections, and the omission of a few sentences or expressions of a personal nature, or which had reference to temporary circumstances of the day.

M'GAVIN

ON

"THE END OF CONTROVERSY."

SECTION I.

When I first saw the title of Dr. Milner's great work, "The End of Religious Controversy," I understood him to mean the "final end" or design of the thing; which is, or should be, the discovery of truth, and the exposure of error. But I had not read many sentences till I discovered that he meant the actual conclusion, or termination, of all controversy on religious subjects. Yes; this foreign bishop, and vicar apostolic, has actually the vanity and presumption to tell the world, that this work of his settles all controversies, and puts *an end* to all disputes about religion! He tells us that Christianity is the religion of Rome, and submission to the pope; and this must end all disputes; for he has said it, and that is enough. Had there been no disputes before, this work would have been properly called the *beginning* of religious controversy; for it suggests

innumerable subjects of debate; but as things are, and have been, I think it ought not to have been called either the "beginning," or the "end," but the "middle;" for there was religious controversy before, and there has been since, and there will be yet more; and this same work of Dr. Milner is calculated to produce more controversy than any other publication by the Papists of the present day. The Rev. Mr. Grier has added a large volume to "the end," or termination; and "The Protestant"* is about to add to it something more; so that the vicar apostolic will find that he has not *done up* his subject so completely as he imagined.

The work is preceded by an address to the lord bishop of St. David's,† and followed by an appendix relative to the writings of the same prelate; in both which the writer displays a spirit of rancorous hostility, too strong for even the cunning of Jesuitism to conceal.

The introductory address and the appendix are both in the same style, only there is more venom in the latter than in the former. In both there is more than common petulance, and an impudent disregard of historical truth; and, upon the whole, he discovers nothing of a superior, or well cultivated

* These strictures first appeared in a weekly paper so called, written by Mr. M'Gavin, and printed at Glasgow.

† Dr. Burgess.

mind. Considering the rank and learning of the person whom he addresses, his style partakes as much of insolence as petulance; and I do not know any thing to which it can be so justly compared, as to the rudeness of ill-bred boys and girls in the streets, who delight in throwing dirt on the clothes of such passengers as show by their dress that they are superior to themselves.

This "End of Religious Controversy" bears one of the most prominent marks of the Beast in its very front; that is, downright lying and imposition. Of the bishop of St. David's the author writes as follows:—"He comes forward in his episcopal mitre, bearing in his hands a new Protestant catechism, to be learned by Protestants of every description, which teaches them to *hate* and *persecute* their elder brethren, the authors of their Christianity and civilization," p. 7. In this short sentence there are several things which require animadversion; but the first and most prominent is the impudent misrepresentation, that this catechism teaches Protestants to hate and persecute their brethren. I have read it over again and again, and can assure the reader that it teaches no such thing: nor does it contain a syllable that, by fair construction, can be made to imply that it is right to hate and persecute any man, of any sect whatever. With as much truth Dr. Milner might have said, that this

catechism teaches treason, and that it recommends the confiscation of the revenues of the church, of which its author is a distinguished ornament and zealous defender. My present business, however, is not to defend the doctrine of the Catechism, but merely to expose the falsehood of the vicar apostolic, and the unblushing effrontery that could make such an assertion, when he must have known that any child could detect it.

It is but fair, however, to state the ground on which Dr. Milner makes such an assertion; and we have it in the following words:—"In fact, this Christian bishop begins and ends his Protestant Catechism with a quotation from a Puritan regicide, declaring, that 'Popery is not to be tolerated, either in public or in private, and that it must be thought how to remove it, and hinder the growth thereof;' adding, 'If they say, that by removing their idols we violate their consciences, we have no warrant to regard conscience which is not grounded on Scripture.'" This is a quotation from the great poet Milton, which his lordship gives, in the introduction, and at the conclusion of his Catechism. It is because he has quoted these words, that Dr. Milner makes the monstrous assertion above noticed, that the bishop's Catechism teaches Protestants to *hate* and *persecute* their brethren. The question is not, whether Milton perfectly

understood the subject of liberty of conscience. Perhaps he did not; as few men of his day understood it so well as it is generally understood now; but taking his words in the strongest and most exceptionable sense that they will bear, they imply nothing like that which Dr. Milner affects to find in them. They cannot without gross violence be made to imply, that it is right to *hate and persecute Papists.* The sum and substance of them is that "*Popery* is not to be tolerated, either in public or in private."

Now, though I have always been an advocate for liberty of conscience, and an enemy of persecution for conscience' sake, and hope to continue so to the end of my life, I cannot but express my agreement with the great poet, that "*Popery* is not to be tolerated," because I believe it is quite intolerable to every man whose religion is derived from the Bible; and that it ought to be opposed, and put down, and extirpated by every means by which it is lawful and possible to oppose and extirpate error. Toleration is not a mere negative; it is so far a positive thing, that if we say a thing is tolerable, it implies acquiescence; it is to say, it may be suffered, or endured; it is not necessary to oppose it. Now, I say, with Milton, that Popery is not to be tolerated; that no Christian can tolerate it without compromising his Christianity, and becoming a

traitor to his Saviour. It ought to be opposed in every way by which error can be successfully opposed: that is, by instruction, by argument, by manifestation of the truth, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; and by prayer to God, night and day, that he would maintain his own cause, and bless the labours of his servants in the ministry of the gospel. Those who know that Popery, as well as every other system of error, is intolerable, will labour in this way for its extirpation; and I know of no other way by which it can be extirpated.

Now, I know well there are men of such perverse minds, that they will apply what I have said of *principles* to *persons*—of errors to the individuals who hold them; and what I have said of extirpation by means of truth and argument, to extirpation by fire and sword. I must, therefore, tell them again, though I cannot give them a mind to understand it, that the things are quite different and distinct; and that what applies to the one cannot be made available with regard to the other. It is as impossible to convince a man by force as to kill him by an argument. To attempt, therefore, to extirpate heresy or error by fire and sword, is as absurd as to punish a murderer by a syllogism. I would never apply force of any kind to extirpate error, while yet I hold that error in general, and Popery in particular, ought not to be

olerated, but extirpated, by the only means which can reach error, which has its seat in the mind, and can be affected only by rational and spiritual weapons.

With regard to *persons*, I do not say that Papists ought not to be tolerated; neither does Milton in the obnoxious passage under consideration. A Papist may be as tolerable in civil society as another man. Many of them, no doubt, are so, and ought not to be punished on account of their errors. They ought not to have power over Protestants, for their principles would compel them to use such power, not for the extirpation of *heresy* merely, but of *heretics;* for *they* have not learned to make the distinction between principles and persons which I have here laid down. But as members of civil society, without power to injure others, they are tolerable, ought to be tolerated, and are tolerated, in this country as much as other dissenters. I hope I shall never see it otherwise; but as for their errors, idolatries, and superstitions, I hold these to be quite intolerable and insufferable; and wherever they are obtruded, they ought instantly to be put down by truth and argument. If they practise their idolatries in private, they must answer for this, and their other secret sins, to God; we have nothing to do with them, for toleration does not apply to that which is unseen and unknown. But if they were to

erect their idols in our streets, and worship them there, I would say, they ought to be put down by the magistrates as insulting to public decorum, and as tending to a breach of the peace; and though they should plead conscience in such a case, I would say with Milton, it ought not to be regarded; not only because the thing is contrary to the word of God, but because the streets do not belong to them, but to the public; and they have no right to prostitute public property for idolatrous purposes.

It is true the Bishop of St. David's prefixes to his Catechism a quotation from Mr. Locke, which may imply that Papists, as well as Popery, ought not to be tolerated. Papists are not specially mentioned, but they may take the passage to themselves if they please; and if they find it excludes them from toleration, it is for a reason which they themselves must approve. The words are—"*These* have no right to be tolerated by the magistrate that will not own and teach the duty of tolerating all men in matters of religion." Locke was the great advocate of toleration in the seventeenth century; and I have no doubt his Letters on the subject had no small influence in preparing the minds of men for the tolerant laws established by king William III. Indeed, except Dr. Owen, I do not recollect any other writer of that age who so explicitly maintains the principle of tolera-

tion, now so universally admitted. It was his very zeal for the "toleration of all men in matters of religion," that led him to exclude Papists from the general rule; because, seeing they would not tolerate others, he thought they could not safely be tolerated. His remark applies to a state of society resembling that of civil warfare, in which the natural principle of self-defence requires and admits of certain rigours not necessary or lawful in other circumstances.

But let the very worst be made of these words of Locke, and of the rest that are quoted from him, they cannot imply that it is our duty to *hate* and *persecute* any sect, or any individual. To refuse toleration to those who will not tolerate others, is not persecution, but a just exercise of civil power, like the punishment of other evil doers. But this scarcely applies to the state of things in England and Scotland in the present day, where Papists do practise toleration, because they are without power, and few in number; and the rule of their church, as laid down by Bellarmine, is, that in such circumstances they ought to be tolerant, and that they ought not to attempt to extirpate heresy by force, *except where it may safely be done.* Thus we tolerate Papists for the very reason why they would not tolerate us, that is, we have power, and they have not.

But there is more objectionable matter in

this sentence of Dr. Milner's than the misrepresentation which I have pointed out. He speaks as if it were granted that Popery was genuine, ancient Christianity—as if it were indisputable and admitted that Papists were the authors of our Christianity and our civilization. It would not have occurred to any man of right thinking or feeling, that any creature, angelic or human, was the author of his religion. We know that Jesus Christ himself is the Author as well as the Finisher of our faith; but Papists seldom, if ever, think of looking so high. They cannot trace their religion to a higher source than some fellow creature of a saint; or, perhaps, rather a sinner of their own rank; and here Dr. Milner roundly asserts, that the authors of our Christianity are the Papists who happened to live in England prior to the Reformation!

There is nothing in which the Bishop of St. David's is more successful, and nothing in which any author could desire to be more successful, so far as the evidence of ancient history goes, than his lordship is, in proving that the original Christianity of Britain was not Popery, and that the British Christians of the first six centuries had no more to do with Rome than they had with Jerusalem, or Antioch, or Alexandria, or with the man in the moon, so far as regarded authority on the one hand, and subjection on the other. But Dr.

Milner, in his introductory address, without invalidating the overwhelming evidence adduced by his lordship on these points, shortly contents himself with re-asserting what has been asserted and disproved a thousand times, that Popery is "the ancient religion," and that Papists were "the authors of our Christianity and civilization." Here again we have something like the impudence of a petulant boy, who having been reproved for a lie which he had told, after having its falsehood demonstrated, holds up an unblushing face, and tells it over again. Parents and tutors have been subjected to the painful necessity of witnessing such depravity, and so must every man who shall enter into controversy with Papists. It has been proved a thousand times that their errors are mere novelties, unknown to the Christians of the apostolic age; and yet I suppose no Papist ever wrote a hundred lines on the subject, without asserting that his religion is as old as the era of Christianity. They hope by this incessant repetition of their lie, to exhaust the patience of Protestants, and so get them to believe it for the sake of peace and quietness; and such is the simplicity of Protestants in general, that there is a probability of their being successful, as they have been with regard to their designation. It was by sheer impudence and perseverance that they got Protestants to drop the term Papists, and call

them Catholics, though they have no more right to that name than the Episcopalians of England, the Presbyterians of Scotland, or the Independents of both kingdoms.

In his postscript, Dr. Milner has a little nibbling at the bishop's authorities with regard to the religion of the ancient British; but he has not adduced a particle of evidence to show that Popery, as it is now, and has been for twelve hundred years in Italy, was professed in this island during the first six centuries. The following statement by Judge Blackstone, prefixed to the Protestant Catechism, remains uncontroverted; and it will readily be admitted that few men were better acquainted with our national history:—"The ancient British church, by whomsoever planted, was a stranger to the bishop of Rome, and his pretended authority. But the pagan Saxon invaders, having driven the professors of Christianity to the remotest corners of our island, their own conversion was afterwards effected by Augustine the monk, and other missionaries from the court of Rome. This naturally introduced *some few* of the *Papal corruptions* in point of faith and doctrine; but we read of no civil authority claimed by the Pope in these kingdoms till the era of the Norman conquest."—*Comm.* b. iv. ch. viii.

It is equally true with regard to Ireland, that Popery is a mere novelty, so far, at least,

as regards subjection to the pope, and paying him tribute. Ireland is said to have been an island of saints fourteen centuries ago; but certainly they were not Papists for many hundred years thereafter. For this we have no less than Papal authority, contained in a bull of Adrian IV., inserted in the postscript to the Protestant Catechism; on which the right reverend author writes as follows:—"The bull of Adrian IV., in which he gives his consent to Henry the Second's conquest of Ireland, on condition of his paying Peter-pence, is a curious and important historical document, and contains indisputable evidence that Popery was *not the ancient religion* of the Irish—*not the religion of Ireland* before the middle of the twelfth century. If this fact, the *modern introduction of Popery* into Ireland, were more generally known in that country, it might tend not a little to break that spell which blinds the eyes of the Irish Papists to the errors of the church of Rome." Then follows a quotation from Archbishop Ussher, strongly expressive of the same sentiment. The archbishop had paid particular attention to the state and history of the ancient Irish, and he writes thus:—"As far as I can collect by such records of the former ages as have come into my hands, either manuscript or printed, the religion professed by the ancient bishops, priests, monks, and other Christians in this land, was in substance the

very same with that which now, by public authority, is maintained therein against the *foreign doctrine* brought thither in *latter times* by the bishop of Rome's followers."

This is perfectly consistent with the fact of missionaries being sent from Rome to Ireland in the fourth and fifth centuries, supposing that to be a fact; for Rome itself was not then thoroughly *papified;* and the fact of receiving the gospel by the preaching of missionaries from Rome, did not then imply subjection to the see of Rome, any more than the fact of America receiving the gospel from England implies subjection to the see of Canterbury.

Now, the fact is, pope Adrian IV. knew that Henry II. of England had a great liking to Ireland, and wished to have it annexed to his dominions. Adrian accordingly issued a bull, authorizing the king to invade and take forcible possession of that island, which he justified and commended by the following reason:—"Your highness's desire of extending the glory of your name on earth, and of obtaining the reward of eternal happiness in heaven, is laudable and beneficial; inasmuch as your intent is, as a Catholic prince, to *enlarge the limits of the church*, to declare the truth of the Christian faith to *untaught and rude nations*, and to eradicate vice from the field of the Lord." Nothing can be more conclusive than this. Ireland did not then belong to the church of Rome, else the con-

quest of it could not have tended to enlarge the church. Ireland had not then received the religion of Rome, else the Pope would not have called it an *untaught* and rude nation. This conclusion is confirmed by several other expressions in the bull for which I have not room. His lordship gives this curious document in the original Latin, with a translation; and for its authenticity he refers to a host of great and well-known authors, such as Giraldus Cambrensis; Matt. Paris, etc.; and there is a translation of it in Rapin's History of England; Collyer's Eccles. Hist. Great Britain; Leland's Hist. Ireland; Lord Littleton's Hist. Henry II., etc. etc.

SECTION II.

My last number was occupied chiefly by an exposure of the misrepresentations contained in one single sentence of the introductory address to Dr. Milner's "End of Religious Controversy." Were I to do equal justice to every sentence—were I to expose in detail every misstatement, misrepresentation, quibble, and sophistry, which this book contains, it would occupy the remainder of my life; and the vicar apostolic himself would probably not live to see an "end" of the controversy which his "End of Religious Controversy" had created. It is not my design to go so much into detail, but rather

to apply my attention to a few leading principles, which may be called pillars of the great Romish temple; and if I can subvert these, the whole fabric must fall—I mean, in argument, not in reality, for I believe the final fall of antichrist is not just yet.*

I have introduced Dr. Milner as asserting that Popery was the Christianity of ancient times, and that to it England was indebted for her Christianity as well as her civilization. This is a main pillar of Popery; yet it cannot stand a breath of such writers as the late archbishop Ussher, and the present bishop of St. David's. It is, in fact, demolished by every Protestant writer who attacks it; yet Dr. Milner writes as if it never had been touched; and he seems to think he obtains a great triumph when he detects the following paradox in the Protestant Catechism:—"The great and fundamental paradox of the right reverend catechist is, that Protestantism subsisted many hundred years before Popery; at the same time that he makes its essence consist in a renunciation of, and opposition to Popery!" p. xiii. In descending to answer such a contemptible quibble, I feel as if I had returned to "The Catholic Vindicator,"† and his "endless contradictions;" for, no doubt, Dr. Milner here insinuates that he has detected a contradic-

* Written in January, 1822.

† A popish periodical of that day.

tion, though it is evident he has performed no such achievement. Allowing the thing to be a paradox, as he states it, it is not a contradiction; for the Protestant religion, though as old as Christianity, in *substance*, has not existed more than three hundred years under the *name* of Protestant. The essence of Christianity is, to believe and confess that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and rose again, according to the Scriptures; yet the apostle Paul said the truth, when he told his hearers that he taught no other thing than what the prophets had written hundreds of years before Christ came into the world. Christianity is the old religion of the patriarchs and prophets, under a new dispensation, and a new name: so Protestantism is the religion of the primitive Christians, reformed and emancipated from the errors and the bondage of Rome. It takes its present name from the circumstance of *protesting* against Romish corruption and idolatry; yet it is essentially the same religion, which, under the name Christianity, spread over a great part of the world before there was an organized church in Rome; and far longer before any bishop of Rome had the effrontery to put himself forward as universal bishop, and head of the Catholic church.

As an example of the summary manner in which Dr. Milner disposes of some funda-

mental points of the controversy, take the following. He is speaking of the propriety of Papists defending themselves against the attacks of adversaries; and he says:—"It is not only lawful, but also a duty which we owe to our fellow subjects and ourselves, to repel these charges, by proving that there was reason, and religion, and loyalty, and good faith among Christians, before Luther quarrelled with Leo x., and Henry viii. fell in love with Ann Bulleyn," p. v. Here he undertakes to prove what nobody denies, that good principles and good conduct were always to be found among *Christians*, though he knows quite well that the question is about *Papists;* and if he means to use the terms as convertible, he is guilty of the logical vice of begging the question. But what I wish the reader particularly to attend to here, is, the impudent assumption that the Protestant religion originated from the passions of two men. There is not a word of argument to prove that such was its origin. The vicar apostolic merely mentions the thing *en passant*, as a thing which all the world knows, and which requires no proof; and yet this very thing, which he tries to pass over as indisputable, is what all the world knows to be a downright falsehood. Luther had no quarrel with the pope when he began to preach against indulgences, which was the commencement of his reformation

It was the pope that first quarrelled with him, because he would not forbear exposing the wickedness of the system of indulgences, which had become a scandal to all Europe. It is equally certain that whatever might be the wickedness of Henry VIII. with regard to Ann Bulleyn, or any other woman, the reformation in England did not originate with him. For more than a century, that is, from the time of Wickliffe, the minds of the people had been gradually opening to perceive the abominable superstitions of Popery. They were quite ready to throw off the yoke before the king was ready to allow them. Had this not been the case, much as the pope thwarted his designs, he would not have been able to throw the yoke off his own shoulder. He did ultimately effect this; but so far as the reformation of religion was concerned, he was rather a hinderer than a promoter of it. It is not denied that he abolished certain superstitions, and removed many abominations from the established religion; but he retained enough of the "dead fly" of Popery to give a stinking savour to the whole mass of his ecclesiastical system, when his people would have delighted in a more thorough reformation, and cleansing of the church from her filthiness and her idols. If our Papists had a particle of candour, they would take the model of the reformation in England from the reign of Edward VI.,

against whose moral character they can find no exception; or, at least, from that of Elizabeth, when the church was established nearly as she is now: for I suppose there are none of her sons that defend the procedure of Henry VIII. *in toto*, or maintain the purity of the church as modelled by him. I have adverted to this subject merely to exhibit an example of the manner in which Popish writers disregard historical truth, and the impudence with which they can obtrude falsehood on the world.

But leaving the introductory address, let us attend to the matter and design of the work itself. Dr. Milner, in order to put an end to all controversy about religion, conjures up a society of Protestants, all very *candid* and *open to conviction*, and *willing to be convinced* by such arguments as he is able to adduce; and as he had the making of the society, as well as of the arguments, he found no difficulty in fitting the one to the other. The following is the manner in which he makes his principal creature, "James Brown, Esq., of New Cottage," introduce the subject. It is in a letter to Dr. Milner himself:—

"REVEREND SIR,—I should need an ample apology for the liberty I take in thus addressing you, without having the honour of your acquaintance, and still more for the heavy task I am endeavouring to impose upon you, if I

did not consider your public character as a pastor of your religion, and as a writer in defenee of it, and likewise your personal character for benevolence, which has been described to me by a gentleman of your communion, Mr. J. C—ne, who is well acquainted with us both. Having mentioned this, I need only add, that I write to you in the name of a society of serious and worthy Christians of different persuasions, to which society I myself belong, who are as desirous as I am to receive satisfaction from you on certain doubts which your late work in answer to Dr. Sturges has suggested to us.*

"However, in making this request of our society to you, it seems proper, reverend sir, that I should bring you acquainted with it, by way of convincing you that it is not unworthy of the attention which I am desirous you should pay to it. We consist, then, of about twenty persons, including the ladies, who, living at some distance from any considerable town, meet together once a week, generally at my habitation of New Cottage, not so much for our amusement and refection, as for the improvement of our minds, by reading the best publications of the day which I can procure from my London book-

* "Letters to a Prebendary, in answer to Reflections on Popery, by the Rev. Dr. Sturges, Prebendary and Chancellor of Windsor."

seller, and sometimes an original essay written by one of the company.

"I have signified that many of us are of different religious persuasions: this will be seen more distinctly from the following account of our members. Among these I must mention, in the first place, our learned and worthy rector, Dr. Carey. He is, of course, of the church of England; but, like most others of his learned and dignified brethren in these times, he is of that free, and, as it is called, liberal turn of mind, as to explain away the mysteries, and a great many of its other articles, which, in my younger days, were considered essential to it. Mr. and Mrs. Topham are Methodists of the Predestinarian and Antinomian class; while Mr. and Mrs. Askew are mitigated Arminian Methodists of Wesley's connexion. Mr. and Mrs. Ranken are honest Quakers. Mr. Barker and his children term themselves Rational Dissenters, being of the old Presbyterian lineage, which is now almost universally gone into Socinianism. I, for my part, glory in being a stanch member of our happy establishment, which has kept the golden mean among the contending sects, and which, I am fully persuaded, approaches nearer to the purity of the apostolic church than any other which has existed since the days of it. Mrs. Brown professes an equal

attachment to the church; yet, being of an inquisitive and ardent mind, she cannot refrain from frequenting the meetings, and even supporting the missions of those self created apostles who are undermining this church on every side, and who are nowhere more active than in our sequestered valley.

"With these differences among us on the most interesting subjects, we cannot help having frequent religious controversies; but reason and charity enable us to manage these without any breach of either good manners or goodwill to each other. Indeed, I believe we are, one and all, possessed of an unfeigned respect and cordial love for Christians of every description, one only excepted. Must I name it on the present occasion?—Yes, I must, in order to fulfil my commission in a proper manner. It is, then, the church which you, reverend sir, belong to; which, if any credit is due to the eminent divines whose works we are in the habit of reading, and more particularly of the illustrious bishop Porteus, in his celebrated and standing work, called 'A Brief Confutation of the Errors of the Church of Rome, extracted from Archbishop Secker's Five Sermons against Popery,' is such a mass of absurdity, bigotry, superstition, idolatry, and immorality, that to say we respect and love those who obstinately adhere to it, as we do other Christians, would

seem a compromise of reason, Scripture, and virtuous feeling." pp. 1—4.

In another long and wordy paragraph, Mr. Brown tells the doctor, that his former work, "Letters to a Prebendary," had removed many of his difficulties, and refuted the most odious of the charges brought against the church of Rome. Some points, however, it seems, had not been cleared up in that work; and Mr. Brown, in the name of the society, writes to the author, requesting him to undertake the task of satisfying them on these points. In compliance with their request, he wrote this great volume of 525 pages, imperial octavo. It was written, it seems, twenty years ago, that is, fifteen years before its first publication; and suppressed because, as he says, bishop Horsley, who had obtained some influence over him, and who had praised his "Letters to a Prebendary" in the House of Lords, wished him to suppress it. The reader is thus left to infer, if he pleases, that bishop Horsley, one of the most powerful writers of his day, considered this work of Dr. Milner's so formidable, that it would endanger the established church, and that he begged the author to spare the venerable fabric. This is what is pretty plainly insinuated; and if it be a true state of the case, I must say of bishop Horsley, what no man ever suspected of him, that he was one of the

greatest literary cowards of modern times. But I cannot help suspecting, that the insinuation owes its origin more to the literary vanity of the Popish, than to the literary cowardice of the Protestant bishop.

Creatures of the imagination will, in general, be found to possess the image of their creator. This is more particularly the case when an author forms an individual, or a society after his own heart, and according to his own taste. The society of New Cottage are quite of Dr. Milner's creation; and, according to their own account, by the pen of their accredited organ, they are all "*serious* and *worthy Christians*." This is an epitome of the holy and infallible church of Rome, which has neither spot nor wrinkle. This they are as a society; and no doubt the author of their existence meant to make them as perfect in their individual characters; but this he could not do, for when we begin to examine them one by one, we find such rank Popish stuff in the composition, as to convince us that the father of lies himself must have had a hand in their formation.

To begin with the "learned and worthy rector, Dr. Carey:" he appears in a character the most infamous that can be imagined; and yet I believe it is perfectly consistent with Popish morality. He has subscribed, and professed *ex animo*, to approve the whole articles of the church of England; that is,

he declares from his heart, with the solemnity of an appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that he believes every doctrine contained in the articles, homilies, and liturgy of the church of England. With equal solemnity he promises, in the presence of God, to teach the doctrine contained in these articles and homilies, to the people whom God has committed to his charge; and on the understanding that he does so, the law of the land allows him to receive the emoluments attached to his office—perhaps five hundred pounds a-year. But instead of believing the doctrines which he professes to believe—instead of teaching what he has sworn to teach, and for which he receives such a handsome provision, he deceives the people committed to his charge, by explaining away, that is, in plain English, denying and subverting, the articles of his church! I defy Jesuitism itself to produce a more flagrant example of downright villany. And this is the learned and *worthy* rector whom Dr. Milner is pleased to place at the head of his society of serious and worthy Christians! Truly, he gains nothing by the conversion of such a man to Popery; for he is a Jesuit already; and like persons of that order two hundred years ago, he must have thrust himself into the church for the purpose of effecting her ruin.

I do not profess to be intimately acquainted

with the church of England; but I have read her articles, and some, at least, of her homilies, and frequently, when I happened to be in England, I have been present at the church service; and I have no hesitation in declaring, that these do contain the true Christian doctrine which Christ himself and his apostles taught— the doctrine, which, if a man believe, he shall be saved; and which, if he do not believe, he shall perish. Now, if there be within the church such a man as Dr. Milner has described, who, eating her bread, lifts up his heel against her, and who, instead of feeding his people with the sound doctrine of the articles which he has subscribed, explains away, or denies the truth contained in these articles, and feeds, or rather poisons, them with his own inventions, or the inventions of others, he is a swindler in the worst sense of the word, or what the Bible calls a wolf in sheep's clothing. It is not wonderful that such a man should be easily converted to Popery; for among Jesuits only can he find men of his own stamp.

The next couple in the group are, Mr. and Mrs. Topham, who, it seems, "are Methodists of the Predestinarian and Antinomian class." I am at a loss what to say of this class of religionists; but if I may judge from the designation which Mr. Brown gives to this branch of his society of *serious* and *worthy* Christians, I would advise him to

take care of his plate, and to have all his valuables under lock and key, when he admits them into his house, whether it be for reading, or refection, or simple, silent meditation. Intimate though I have been with Calvinists, who hold the doctrine of predestination, I never met with an Antinomian in my life; and I do not know what it is like, though I have heard that there are such creatures in England. This, if I understand the word, is a creature who believes, or at least professes to believe, that he is not under any obligation to obey the law of God. I know there are thousands of *practical* Antinomians, who live as if they were under no obligation to obey God's law; just as there are many practical atheists, who live as if there were no God; but as I never met with a man who maintained in theory, that there is no God, so I never saw a man who would maintain the proposition, that he was not under obligation to obey God's law, or that held the doctrine of predestination in such a sense as to imply this. But, perhaps, there are such in England; and Dr. Milner did right to place a couple of them in the society of persons whom he meant to convert to Popery; for they are already Papists in the worst sense, who think that there is any power in heaven, or earth, or under the earth, that can lawfully dispense with their obligation to obey that law which is holy and

just and good; for the honour of which Christ came into the world, and laid down his life; and who did this for the very purpose, not of relieving men from the obligation, but of renewing them to a life of obedience to the law, by infusing a new principle, supplying new motives, and imparting the efficient aid of his Spirit for the purpose of enabling his people to live a life of obedience to the law.

The next couple are " mitigated Arminian Methodists of Mr. Wesley's connexion." I never heard of mitigated Arminianism before; and as I do not know what it is, I must be excused from dissecting it. The next two " are honest Quakers." I know a good many of the respectable body who bear this name, and I am persuaded they are too *honest* to spend their time in any sort of religious intercourse with persons of such doubtful principles and character as the rest of the group. The *rational* Dissenters, as they presumptuously style themselves, as if all others were irrational, like the Antinomians, are not far from Popery, having nearly met with it in the opposite extreme of infidelity.

Now we come to Mr. Brown himself, who, by his own account, is the most inconsistent character of the whole collection. He tells Dr. Milner, that not only Dr. Carey, but that most others of his learned and dignified brethren, explain away the articles of the church as he does; that is, that most of the

clergy of the established church are swindlers and Jesuits, as well as his rector; and he glories in being "a stanch member of this happy establishment," which "approaches nearer to the purity of the apostolic church than any other which has existed since the age of it!" I request the reader to remember that this is a caricature representation by Dr. Milner himself, put into the mouth of a pretended friend, but a real enemy of the established religion; and by such trickery does the vicar apostolic form what he calls a society of Protestants, whom he may soon convert into *serious worthy* Christians, according to the faith of Rome.

This said stanch member of the establishment commences his letter by a few civil words of flattery to our vicar apostolic—"a sop to Cerberus," to bribe his good humour, and avert his growl. And we may form some idea of the vicar's appetite for adulation, by the flavour of what is offered, and the greediness with which he swallows it, from so "worthy" a fraternity. The writer tells him, that "his personal character for benevolence" has been "described to him;" and he appears to have intended to ascertain the dimensions of this benevolence, by trying whether it could induce him to accept of praise from a set of people, who unblushingly avow that hypocrisy, barefaced lying, and a contempt of the law of God, are principal ingredients

in their composition. I think that even "James Brown, of New Cottage, Esquire," must have been amazed at the vicar's simplicity, in transferring this letter to the pages of his polemical tome, as a certificate of his "benevolent disposition." I am sure that no other than a Papist could have had the courage to offer a similar testimonial. He previously informs him, that "it is a heavy task he is endeavouring to impose upon him;" but seeing that Mr. Brown and his friends have succeeded in convincing him, that their society "is not unworthy of his attention," they may assuredly take courage—none of their scruples upon "modes of faith" can be of so stubborn a texture as to occasion the vicar much trouble. I think it probable, however, that he might find it necessary to avail himself of the assistance of the civil magistrate, in teaching them correct "modes of practice!"

SECTION III.

Dr. Milner enters professedly on the subject of his work in Letter v., which is entitled, "Method of finding out the True Religion," and which commences thus:—"Dear sir—It is obvious to common sense, that, in order to find out any hidden thing, or to do any difficult thing, we must first discover, and then follow, the proper method for such

purpose." Here, at the very outset, we find this great Romish doctor laying down a principle, as obvious and indisputable, which has no more to do with the subject than the dimensions of a circle have to do with properties of coal gas. He speaks of something that is "hidden," that is to be "found out," which finding out is "difficult," and in order to which "we must first discover, and then follow, the proper method." In his opinion, therefore, religion is an occult science, and the study of it is like the search for the philosopher's stone, or the discovery of a self-moving machine that is to find out the longitude.

Now, this has nothing to do with Christianity, that is, "the true religion" which Dr. Milner speaks of "finding out;" for if this depended upon our *seeking*, or rather upon our first *discovering*, and then *following* a way to *seek* it, it is not probable that ever we should find it. Christianity is not a hidden thing which men are to find out by seeking; it is a published thing which finds out men who are not seeking *it*, though they may be seeking something which they mistake for it. It consists in the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Now, this is not by any means a hidden thing, or a thing the knowledge of which is of difficult attainment. I grant that the attainment of it would be not only difficult, but impos-

sible, if it depended upon human seeking, and human discovery; but Christ tells us plainly, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," John iii. 16—19. This is not a hidden thing which we are to find out by diligent seeking. Christ told it to Nicodemus, made it known to all his apostles, and commanded them to publish it to the whole world; which they did when they went preaching the gospel to all nations.

I grant that men in all ages have entertained the mistake that they might do something to *find out* a religion for themselves. The folly of this is exposed by the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, chap. x. verses 2—11. Speaking of his brethren the Jews, he says, "they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; for they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness

of God." They went about seeking to find out a way of approaching to God, different from that which he had prescribed, but which would be more agreeable to themselves. But the apostle tells them that they had nothing to seek for, or find out, for the thing they inquired about was published and brought nigh to them, and urged upon them, as a full development of the true religion; and it is this:—"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above: or, who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring Christ up again from the dead." What endless seeking this would be!) "But what saith it? *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart:* that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

From this passage it is very evident that the "true religion," that is, the way of a sin-

ner's salvation, is not a hidden thing which the sinner must find out by seeking, but a published, notorious thing, urged upon him by the word of God in the Scriptures, and by the preaching of the gospel, if he will open his eyes to the one, or his ears to the other; and a thing of which, in such a country as this, he cannot be entirely ignorant, unless he be of those who love darkness rather than light, and who will not come to the light lest their deeds should be reproved.

But Dr. Milner's whole work proceeds upon the assumption that the true religion is a *hidden* matter. He does not attempt to show that it is so. He assumes it as undisputed and granted that it is a "hidden thing," yet to be *found out;* and he proceeds to lay down rules for finding it out, as an astronomer lays down rules for calculating an eclipse, or the revolution of a planet; but, unhappily for Dr. Milner's system, his rules are not so certain and satisfactory as those of the astronomer.

Now, if I have shown, as I hope I have, in few words, that Christianity, "the true religion," is a revealed, published thing, and seeing Dr. Milner builds his whole work upon the false assumption that it is a secret, hidden thing, I am entitled to say, not merely that I have shaken a main pillar of his system, but that I have swept away its foundation. His great fabric falls to the ground at once, and his whole 525 pages are involved in the ruin

of a single sentence, and that the first sentence of the systematical part of the work. All that follows is no better than waste paper; I might very honourably pass it over without farther notice, and without forfeiting my pledge that I should answer the book, for the above is a very sufficient answer and refutation. But I have no wish to dispose of the adversary in so summary a way. His work contains a great deal of curious matter, and as I take it to be the standard work of modern Papists in England, I consider the exposition of its principles a matter of importance to Protestants, and even to the Papists themselves.

To the above doctrine, however, I anticipate an objection, which it is proper to dispose of before I leave the subject:—Is not the true religion that which Solomon speaks of under the name of wisdom? and does he not say, "If thou *seekest* her as silver, and *searchest* for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and *find* the knowledge of God?" It doubtless is so; and it is of the true religion that he speaks again, when he says, "Get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." But we must connect with this what is said in another passage, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." The seeking and searching here do not relate to a thing hidden,

or altogether unknown, but to a thing dimly represented under types and shadows; and it was the study of spiritual enlightened men under that dispensation to inquire into and find out the meaning of these typical representations. This was to find the knowledge of God, in his characters of goodness and truth, justice and mercy, which were formerly shadowed forth, but now clearly displayed by the incarnation, obedience, and death of his own Son. Respecting these things we are told that the prophets searched and inquired diligently, when they testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. It does not appear that they understood the full import of the prophecies uttered by themselves, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But they inquired diligently into their meaning, and into the meaning of those rites and institutions which Moses had prescribed; and that which required much inquiry and searching on their part, is as clearly revealed in the New Testament as human language can express it. Thus the apostle Paul says, God had revealed by his Spirit to him, and he had made known to the churches, that of which Isaiah had said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. And again he says, "God hath made known to me the mystery" (that is, hidden or secret things;)

"whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Then he proceeds to tell us, that grace was given him to "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make *all men see* what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been *hid* in God," etc. See the whole passage, Eph. iii. 3—10. Thus, things which were comparatively hidden from the fathers, or even unknown to them altogether, are plainly unfolded to us in the writings of the apostles.

I do not say there is no part of the word of God, even of the New Testament, that does not require much study and research to find out its meaning; for there are things which no human understanding has yet reached, or is, perhaps, able to reach in this world; but the essence of Christianity, "the true religion," is not one of those things. It stands conspicuously forward in the discourses of Christ himself, particularly in the third chapter of John's Gospel, and in the discourses of Peter and Paul in the Acts of the Apostles; and it meets us in a great variety of expression and illustration in every epistle. It is, that Christ "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification:"

that he "bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed;" and it "is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Every one of these sentences contains the truth, which if a man believe he shall be saved; but which if he do not believe, he shall without doubt perish everlastingly. There are hundreds of passages in the New Testament equally plain and explicit; and what is thus made known to the sons of men, in language which they understand, cannot be called a secret, hidden thing, that they cannot find out but with difficulty.

We must, indeed, admit the melancholy fact, that there are many to whom this gospel is hid, notwithstanding the clearness of its manifestation; just as there are many to whom the sun in the firmament is a hidden object, because they are naturally blind, or wilfully shut their eyes that they may not see. The apostle Paul tells us of some to whom the gospel was hid, because the god of this world hath blinded their minds, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." These are described as not believing the gospel. Their hearts are preoccupied with worldly things, and with the love of sin, which they must abandon if they receive

the gospel; or they are in bondage to carnal ordinances, which they cannot be persuaded to relinquish. This was the miserable condition of the Jews in the days of the apostles; and it is the no less miserable condition of Papists in our own day.

But to proceed with Dr. Milner. He says in the same fifth letter:—"Before I enter into any disquisition on this all-important controversy concerning the '*right rule of faith*,' on which the determination of every other depends, I will lay down three fundamental maxims, the truth of which I believe no rational Christian will dispute.

"I. Our Divine Master, Christ, in establishing a religion here on earth, to which all nations of it were invited, Matt. xxviii. 19, left some RULE or *method* by which those persons who sincerely seek for it may certainly find it.

"II. This rule or method must be SECURE and never-failing, so as not to be ever liable to lead a rational, sincere inquirer into error, impiety, or immorality.

"III. This rule or method must be UNIVERSAL, that is to say, adapted to the abilities and other circumstances of all those persons for whom the religion itself was intended, namely, the great bulk of mankind.

"By adhering to these undeniable maxims, we shall quickly, dear sir, and clearly discover the method appointed by Christ for

arriving at the knowledge of the truths which he has taught; in other words, at *the right rule of faith.*"

The above, the reader will perceive, are proposed, and laid down with great solemnity, as "fundamental maxims," which "no rational Christian will dispute," and as "undeniable maxims." Yet I am sure the intelligent reader will see at once that they are mere gratuitous assumptions, and absurd quibbles and sophistries. Christ did not establish a religion here on earth, or on any spot of the earth, such as Rome, to which all nations were invited to come, and for the purpose of coming to which they required a rule to know where it might be found; but he commanded his servants to go to all nations of the earth, preaching the gospel to every creature; that is, bringing it home to every man's bosom, with demonstration of the Spirit, and with Divine power; and those to whom it thus came received it, not as the word of man, but as the word of God. So it is still the duty of those who preach the gospel, not to prescribe a rule by which men may find out the true religion, but to make the true religion find out them; that is, bringing home the word of God to their hearts and consciences; for where that word is faithfully preached, it does commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, either by provoking the enmity of the

carnal mind by its Divine purity, or subduing the carnal mind, and imparting a new mind to the acknowledging of the truth by its Divine energy.

But the sophistry and shuffling of the vicar apostolic appear more manifest in the last of the sentences above quoted, where he says, we may "clearly discover the method appointed by Christ for *arriving at* the knowledge of the truths which he has taught; in other words, at '*the right rule of faith.*'" I do not stop to inquire why it is that he puts the truths which Christ has taught at such a great distance from the people that they must *arrive at them* by a laborious process such as he describes. I shall direct the reader's attention rather to the jesuitical artifice which confounds things that are different, evidently for the purpose of deceiving, or at least bewildering, the reader. He says, the truths which Christ taught are, in other words, "the right rule of faith;" meaning it to be understood that the terms are convertible. Now, the latter phrase is a piece of Popish manufacture, invented, and constantly used, for the purpose of drawing away men's minds from what is meant by the other phrase, namely, the truths which Christ taught. "The right rule of faith," as we shall see by and by, comprises an immense heap of traditions, to which the truths which Christ taught bear no proportion, in point of

quantity, and to which they are directly opposed in spirit and quality; yet in the above shuffling way does Dr. Milner attempt to make them pass for the same thing.

So far as I recollect, there is nothing in Scripture that corresponds with Dr. Milner's "*right rule of faith.*" The truths which Christ taught, are the *subject matter* of the faith of all true Christians; and the things which he commanded, are the *rule* of their conduct. The former are the things most assuredly believed by us; and the latter are the things most diligently practised by us, if we be indeed his disciples. But a *rule* of faith, that is, a rule of believing, and a *right* rule of believing, which implies that there is a wrong rule of believing, appears to me no better than unintelligible jargon, fit only for the meridian of Popery. The word of God distinguishes between them that believe and them that believe not, and assures us that while the former shall be saved, the latter shall perish. The faith of the one, and the unbelief of the other, relate to the same thing; that is, the gospel of the grace of God, which brings salvation to all men, by the free and unlimited invitation of all men to partake of its benefits, which are actually imparted to all that believe, and which are withheld from unbelievers, because they will not have them, but spurn them away, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life. In

short, if there be anything in the Bible about faith, that can properly be called a *rule*, it is this, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned."

Dr. Milner having taken it for granted that the *finding out* "the right rule of faith," is the same thing as ascertaining what is the true religion, proceeds in his sixth letter to describe three different rules, which he introduces to our notice in the following manner:— "THE FIRST FALLACIOUS RULE OF FAITH.—Dear Sir, Among serious Christians, who profess to make the discovery and practice of religion their first and earnest care, three different methods or rules have been adopted for this purpose. The first consists in a supposed *private inspiration*, or an immediate light and motion of God's Spirit, communicated to the individual. This was the rule of faith and conduct formerly professed by the Montanists, the Anabaptists, the Family of Love, and is now professed by the Quakers, the Moravians, and different classes of the Methodists." This fallacious rule leads the vicar apostolic to introduce a variety of topics, on which he expatiates at great length, and apparently with extreme delight. He professes at the outset to speak of *serious Christians*; but it is evident he uses the words in derision, and with a sneer at what he means to represent as serious religion. He fills

about fifteen large pages with the most nauseous ribaldry that can be imagined, and with most exaggerated accounts of the extravagances of enthusiasts of various denominations, from the German Anabaptists in Luther's time, down to the late prophetess Joanna Southcote. All this he has been pleased to ascribe to this first fallacious rule of faith; and he handles the subject in such a manner as to make it appear that Protestantism is chargeable with all the folly and mischief on which he dilates with so much pleasure. He sets one set of enthusiasts a fighting with another; and he stands by with as much delight and exultation as ever a company of savage villagers enjoyed at a bullbaiting, or the conflict of two game cocks. This is an exercise and a triumph truly worthy of a right reverend bishop and vicar apostolic of the holy Roman church! of one who professes to reconcile all differences, and end all disputes about religion, by ascertaining the right rule of faith! It would be easy to retaliate, and overwhelm him with confusion, if he were capable of it, by a detail of far greater extravagance, folly, and wickedness practised, not by persons whom all acknowledge to have been fools, but by great saints whom the Pope has canonized, and whom Papists at this very day worship with bended knee. I could relate the monstrous

extravagances of St. Francis, the founder of the Franciscan order; the mad enthusiasm of St. Ignatius Loyola, the father of the Jesuits, who thought he was divinely inspired to kill every man who denied the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary; and I could insert the absurd and impious revelations of St. Bridget, which are hawked and sold in the streets of Dublin and Cork every day. These are fairly chargeable against the church of Rome, because she approves of them, and honours and worships those who wrote and did such things; but Protestantism cannot justly be charged with the impieties and absurdities of John of Munster, or Joanna Southcote, because they are disavowed and condemned by the whole body of Protestants, with the exception of a few crazy old men and women, who scarcely know their right hand from their left.

I should, however, think it unworthy of my time and paper, and insulting to my readers, to answer a fool according to his folly in this instance; or to retaliate, by exhibiting the great Romish saints as he has done the poor enthusiasts of the reformation; for these saints cannot be exhibited in their true characters, or have their extravagance exposed, without laying open such scenes as would make every modest reader throw my work into the fire.

SECTION IV.

In my last section, I introduced Dr. Milner as laying down certain rules for *finding out* the true religion. I disposed of his first rule in a summary manner, as a thing with which I had nothing to do, seeing it related merely to the extravagances of certain enthusiasts whom no sober Protestant acknowledges; such as Joanna Southcote, and John of Munster. I showed, also, that there was a fallacy in his very enunciation of the subject; that the true religion was a thing to be *found out*, whereas it is a thing plainly published to all the world.

I come now to the second of his rules for finding out the true religion, which he represents as also fallacious: that is, "The written word of God, or the Bible, *according as it is understood by every particular reader or hearer of it.*" "This," says he, "is the professed rule of the more regular sects of Protestants, such as the Lutherans, the Calvinists, the Socinians, the Church-of-England-men," *Lett.* vi. p. 29. I shall take the liberty of dismissing the Socinians, as not belonging to any regular "sect of Protestants" that I know of, and because I know nothing about their rule of faith, or whether they have any rule at all except their own reason. Dr. Milner introduces them, along with the Lutherans and Calvinists, by way of banter as

he does the Southcotians under his first rule, in order to make it appear that Luther, and Calvin, and Socinus, and Joanna Southcote are all upon a par, as acknowledged regular Protestants. This is a very childish trick of his; and any child might retort upon his holy and intallible church, that she nourished in her bosom principles as impious, and encouraged practices as absurd, as any that can be justly laid to the charge of either Socinus or Joanna Southcote, bad as these are.

But what will the reader say, when I have shown, as I shall do presently, that Dr. Milner himself is a greater juggler than even Joanna Southcote? She deceived only a few simpletons by her pretended revelations; but here the doctor attempts to deceive the whole world by a silly sophism, or false representation; and I suppose the whole world of Papists are deceived by it; for the thing is repeated by every little scribe who undertakes to defend his holy church. It is, that the Protestant rule of faith is "the Bible, *according as it is understood by each particular reader or hearer of it.*" This is what Dr. Milner represents as the *professed* rule of Protestants. All Popish writers of the present day say the same thing; and the vicar apostolic, in this instance, may be considered the leader of the faith of his brethren. But it is a piece of barefaced imposition, and downright falsehood, for I must call things

by their own names, be the consequences what they may. The Protestant rule of faith is not the Bible according as it is understood by every particular reader or hearer of it. No Protestant church in the world ever professed such a rule; and I never knew an individual Protestant who professed it. Yet all modern Papists take it for granted that it is our only rule. They argue upon the assumption that it is so; and they draw many absurd conclusions from it, which they attempt to identify with Protestantism, though they are only wicked fancies of their own.

The subject matter of our faith, and the rule of our conduct, is not the word of God as *understood by every reader, or by any reader or hearer of it;* but the word of God *as dictated by his Spirit, and written by his apostles and prophets.* This is the perfect standard to which all consistent Protestants appeal. It is not affected by the *understanding*, or the *misunderstanding* of it by any any man or body of men in the world. It is immutable and infallible truth in itself; and as it was meant for the instruction and salvation of men, it is addressed to men in their own language, with sufficient plainness for effecting the purpose intended by it.

I know it will be replied, that it is possible to misunderstand the meaning of Scripture, and that, in point of fact, many do misunderstand it. This is true; but it is just as pos-

sible to misunderstand any other communication that is made through the medium of words and sentences. Allowing that Romish tradition is of equal authority with the written word, which is the Popish doctrine, is not the language of tradition as liable to be misunderstood as the language of the written word of God? Papists say, No; because, they say, they have the living voice of the church which determines the true meaning of every doubtful passage. But is not the living voice of the church, supposing there were such a thing, as liable to be misunderstood as God's own word, written by his own inspired messengers? I think this can scarcely admit of dispute. The church is composed of men like ourselves, who do not in general possess more knowledge of human nature than other men. Their language may therefore be equivocal and inadequate to convey the truth with certainty to the minds of other men; but the Holy Ghost, who dictated the Scriptures, knows with infallible certainty what is level to our capacity; and it would be most impious to say that he has not brought down to the understanding of men, what he commanded to be published for the salvation of men.

Here the great question is, How shall man, who is a sinner, escape the punishment of his sins, and be restored to the enjoyment of the favour of God? The whole of Christianity

hinges upon the answer to this question, and surely, if the Bible does not furnish an answer sufficiently plain and intelligible, it is vain to look for it from any other quarter. The Bible tells us, that God himself found out a ransom for us; that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16; that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," 1 Cor. xv. 3; that "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," Eph. i. 7. The same thing is brought to view in almost every page of the Bible; and if the language is not plain and level to the capacity of any child, let Papists tell us what is plain and intelligible. The fact is, no human language can make the truth more plain than as it stands in the Bible; and I never knew any person attempt to make it more plain, without throwing a mist and a darkness about it, more calculated to bewilder than to guide the path of a sincere inquirer after the truth.

But if the truth by which sinners are saved; that is, the truth which constitutes the essence of Christianity, be so plainly revealed in the Bible, how comes it, it will be asked, that so many apparently sincere inquirers come short of it, and seem never to attain the knowledge of it? The apostle

Paul tells us how this happens:—"The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them," 2 Cor. iv. 4. Here it is evident the apostle represents the gospel—the essence of Christianity—as a glorious light shining all around. And why did it not shine into the hearts of all men? that is, why did not all men understand and receive it? It was hid by means of certain things. It was hid from the Jews by their obstinate adherence to the rites of the law of Moses, which were now abolished, as the apostle tells us in the context: "They could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: but their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts," 2 Cor. iii. 13—15. Christ took away the veil, so that all who would open their eyes might see the meaning and consummation of the law of Moses. But they would not open their eyes to the light. Their minds were preoccupied by carnal things. They wanted to have nothing to do with such heavenly and spiritual things as the gospel brought to view, and pressed upon them; and this is ascribed to the influence of the god of this world, by

whom their minds were blinded; they were so fascinated by things of a carnal nature, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ had no charms for them.

The same thing, in effect, happens to men in general, who, under the influence of a carnal mind, come to read the Scriptures. Every thing is strange and foreign to them. They are not merely without ideas on the subject of religion; for if this were the case, they might receive information theoretically correct, as they would do in reading a book of natural science; but they come to the Bible with minds preoccupied by *religious* notions fundamentally and intrinsically erroneous. They do not know the state of their own minds, or so much as suspect that they have received a wrong bias. Instead, therefore, of giving all their former ideas to the winds, and submitting to receive the simple testimony of the Holy Spirit, as it is given in the Bible, they strive to reconcile what they find there with their own preconceptions of what should be. This leads them to misunderstand, and to pervert the plainest passages; and thus the god of this world takes occasion from the things which occupy the minds of carnal men to blind them to the truth of the gospel. Every man who receives the Divine testimony must become as a little child. This lesson we have from Christ's own lips; and surely nothing can show more

clearly that the gospel is a plain and simple thing; and that none shall miss the understanding of it who honestly apply their minds to the subject.

Of all the men in the world, Papists are most apt to mistake the meaning of the Divine testimony; for they have not only the vicious and self-righteous preconceptions of the carnal mind to blind their eyes; but they have added to these the accumulated errors and absurdities of more than twelve centuries, which stand as an insurmountable barrier between them and the plain gospel report. The church of Rome did not directly obliterate all that Christ and his apostles taught. If she had, it would, humanly speaking, have been much more easy to impress the plain truth of the gospel upon the minds of her children. She accomplished the work of the devil much more effectually, by taking Scripture truths and Divine institutions, and dressing them up in a fool's coat, which makes the bold infidel laugh, and impresses the ignorant superstitious vulgar with a sort of indefinable dread upon his mind, like that which a heathen feels when he worships a cow, or a monkey, or any other ridiculous idol which his priest has set up. Whenever, therefore, a Papist reads the Bible, and has an important truth present to his mind, his attention is diverted by the recollection of something like that truth which his church

inculcates, but which is entirely a different thing; but it is a thing which in his mind has the privilege of occupancy, and the right of prescription. He cannot, therefore, part with it; but if he has any respect for the Bible, and if he wishes to keep his conscience on good terms with it, he will not directly reject what he finds there; but he will labour to reconcile it to what his church teaches him. Having his mind preoccupied by a belief that what the church teaches must be true; and that the church is the sole judge of the meaning of what is contained in the Bible; he feels no difficulty in receiving the Bible testimony in the church's meaning, however perverted it may be, and though it should be, as it really is in many instances, directly opposed to the genuine sense of the Divine record.

For instance, Christ addresses sinners in these words:—"Repent ye, and believe the gospel," Mark i. 15. Obedience to this command implies an entire change of mind, and a real turning from sin to the love and service of God, whose grace is brought to view by the gospel of Christ, which works effectually in renewing unto holiness all who receive it. But these important and comprehensive words, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel," are presented to every Papist, by his church, in this form—"Do penance, and recite the belief." This is a mere carnal

image of the spiritual doctrine which Christ taught; but it supplies the place of that doctrine, and it diverts the mind from it as effectually as if it were flatly contradicted, and much more insidiously. To do penance at a priest's bidding, and to the extent which he requires, and to recite the creed, are what any man may do, without the least change of mind, or turning from sin to holiness; and this is, in fact, the essence of Popery: it is to make men believe that they are serving God, when their hearts and all that is in them are devoted to the service of the devil.

I have made this digression to show how naturally a mind preoccupied by erroneous notions, is led to pervert the plainest passages of Scripture. This is no disparagement of the word of God. It is plain enough to those who honestly attend to what it contains; and had the truths of Divine revelation been so expressed that it was impossible for human ingenuity and depravity to pervert or misapprehend them, I suppose an exception against them would have been taken on that account, that they did not leave men to the exercise of their natural understanding, or to the freedom of their will.

Now, if it were true, as Dr. Milner says, that the Protestant rule of faith is the Bible, *as understood by every particular reader*, it would infer the absurdity of being a rule, and no rule at the same time. The Doctor, in-

deed, argues through many a long page as if it were so. He might as well have spent his time in beating the air, or thrashing the water. He is combating what no Protestant church ever believed; but a mere, and a malignant, invention of his own, or borrowed from some other author equally malignant.

While Protestants take the word of God as their rule, in the sense which God intends, and in that sense only, they maintain that every man has a right to read it for himself, and to form his own judgment of its meaning. This is a right which he has, however, merely in relation to his fellow men. In relation to God, he has no right to form any judgment of *his own*. He ought to receive implicitly, and with devout gratitude, what God has graciously been pleased to reveal for the salvation of fallen men, and for the rule of their conduct, without presuming to add a thought of his own to the Divine communication, or to give a shade of meaning to that communication, different from what the words of it necessarily bear. If he act a different part, he must answer to God for his arrogance and presumption. To man he is not bound to answer, farther than the rights of other men may entitle them to put him away from their communion, if he shall persist in maintaining principles inconsistent with Christian fellowship. This the very nature of religious society admits and requires; but more than this, no

church has a right to do with regard to any individual, be his errors what they may. If one is so perverse and presumptuous as to impute his errors to the holy and perfect word of God, it is an aggravation of his guilt; and it seems to be the design of Popish writers in general, and Dr. Milner in particular, to urge men on to be guilty of this wickedness, by their insidious misrepresentations of the Bible, as if it necessarily led men into error.

But it is time to return to Dr. Milner's proposition, that the Bible alone is a fallacious rule of faith. This he attempts to illustrate by means of a number of propositions, of which the following is the first:—"If Christ had intended that all mankind should learn his religion from a book, namely, the New Testament, he himself would have written that book, and would have enjoined the obligation of learning to read it as the first and fundamental precept of his religion; whereas he never wrote anything at all, unless perhaps the sins of the Pharisees with his finger upon the dust," John viii. 6. Such is the impious and presumptuous hypothesis of this right reverend vicar apostolic. *If Christ had intended that men should learn his religion from the New Testament, he himself would have written it!* It is doubtful if even Tom Paine himself ever made a more impudent attack upon the authority of Divine revela-

tion than this. It goes, indeed, to set aside both the Old and New Testament, with the exception of the ten commandments, which alone were written by the finger of God; and his right reverence could easily, by another stroke of his pen, set these aside too, by pleading, as he does with regard to the apostolic writings, that we have not the autograph, or original copy, written by their own hands. By the above passage from Dr. Milner's work, the reader will be reminded of the indignant interrogatories which the Holy Spirit, by the prophet Isaiah, addressed to the idolaters of his day, who seem to have been men of the same spirit, and also guilty of the impiety of saying what the Lord *ought* to have done:—"Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" Isa. xl. 13, 14. Were such questions addressed to the people of England in the present day, Dr. Milner would, perhaps, step forward, and say, "Here am I, ready to instruct the Almighty!" It is painful to be obliged to put such blasphemy upon paper; but it is really no more than what his words imply. Thus he appears a little antichrist himself; and would be a great one if he could,

exalting himself above all that is called God, and that is worshipped.

Dr. Milner lays great stress on the fact of Christ's having commanded his apostles to go into all the world, and *preach* the gospel by word of mouth; but an infidel objector might retort upon him in this manner:—"If Christ had intended that all men should learn his religion from preaching, he would have gone himself and preached to all mankind." He might reply, "We know the fact is otherwise, for he commanded the apostles to go and preach." So we say the fact is against Dr. Milner's hypothesis, for we know he inspired his apostles to write the gospel for the instruction of all nations; which fact rests upon the same authority as that of the commandment to go and preach.

After a number of pages of irrelevant matter, our author returns to the same subject in the following terms:—"When I remarked, that our blessed Master, Jesus Christ, wrote no part of the New Testament himself, and gave no orders to his apostles to write it, I ought to have added that, if he had intended it to be, together with the Old Testament, the *sole* rule of religion, he would have provided means for their being able to follow it; knowing, as he certainly did, that 99 in every 100, or rather 999 in every 1000, in different ages and countries, would not be able to read at all, and

much less to comprehend a page of the sacred writings. Yet no such means were provided by him, nor has he so much as enjoined it to his followers in general to study letters," p. 63. Here again we have the presumption of prescribing what the Lord should or would have done, had he meant the Bible to be "the *sole* rule of religion." But the argument is of no force unless Dr. Milner can show that he knows with infallible certainty what was best to be done. The very giving of the Scriptures in the language of men, is a proof that Christ intended them for the instruction of men in things which relate to their salvation. He provided also means for their reading and understanding them, when he endowed them with rational powers, and promised the aid of his Spirit to guide men into all truth. But the Doctor, it seems, will not be satisfied without the interposition of a miracle, to teach the mechanical art of reading, in which he is as unreasonable as the unbelieving Jews, who, after all the miracles which they had seen Christ perform, still demanded of him a sign from heaven. To say that Christ did not intend the Bible to be "the sole rule of religion," because he did not miraculously teach all men to read, is as absurd as to say that he did not intend the fruits of the earth to be the food of man, seeing he did not miraculously instruct them in the art of husbandry, and in those other arts

by which the implements of husbandry are constructed.

I conclude at present, by asking Dr. Milner to tell the world how he knows that Christ "gave no orders to his apostles to write" the New Testament. He will say, he cannot lawfully be called upon to prove a negative; then, I say, he ought not to assert a negative which he cannot prove. We are sure that Christ, after his resurrection, appeared repeatedly to the apostles, and spoke to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God, Acts i. 3. For anything that we know, the writing of the New Testament was one of those things. But the fact of the case renders argument upon hypothesis quite unnecessary. The apostle John was expressly commanded by Christ to write epistles to seven churches in Asia, Rev. ii. and iii. Besides, when Christ was going away, he told his disciples that he would send them the Holy Spirit, who would guide them into all truth. The Holy Spirit guided and inspired them to write the New Testament, from which we are sure that it was the will of Christ that they should write it, and leave it as their testimony to the world of what they had seen and heard, after they should cease to speak by their living voice.

SECTION V.

Those who have read this work from the beginning will recollect that, on the subject of

Bible reading, I made large replies to a correspondent in "The Orthodox Journal," who argued that we could not be sure that any of the books of which the New Testament is composed were the genuine writing of the apostles; particularly that, seeing the apostle Paul intrusted his Epistle to the Romans to a female servant named Phebe, to be conveyed by her to the Christians in Rome, we could not know whether she had not lost or destroyed the original epistle, and composed out of her own head that which stands in our Bibles as the Epistle to the Romans. The writer to whom I then replied was this same Dr. Milner himself, the bishop of Castabala, and vicar apostolic of the midland district of England! It is he who makes the above very absurd supposition; and I find in his great work, "The End of Religious Contro versy," the identical letters, to which a reply will be found in "The Protestant," vol. i. pp. 269—271,* and vol. iii pp. 226—240.†

It is needless to go over the same ground again. The sum of the matter is, the right reverend vicar apostolic maintains the proposition, that the Bible alone is not sufficient for our information and instruction in matters of religion. I have endeavoured to show that it is sufficient; and it remains with the reader to judge whether I have established the point. Passing this, therefore, as disposed

* See Addenda A. † See Addenda B.

of already, I shall treat my readers with some curious matter, contained in his ninth letter, which, with remarks upon it, will occupy the remaining part of this number.

Dr. Milner says, "I have said enough concerning the *contentions* among Protestants; I will now, by way of concluding this letter, say a word or two of their *doubts*. In the first place, it is certain, as a learned Catholic controvertist argues, that a person who follows your rule *cannot make an act of faith;* this being, according to your great authority, Bishop Pearson, an assent to the revealed articles, with a *certain and full persuasion* of their revealed truth: or to use the words of your primate, Wake—'When I give my assent to what God hath revealed, I do it, not only with a *certain assurance* that what I believe *is true*, but with an *absolute security that it cannot be false.*' Now, the Protestant who has nothing to trust to but his own talents, in interpreting the books of Scripture, especially with all the difficulties and uncertainties which he labours under, according to what I have shown above, never can rise to this certain assurance and absolute security as to what is revealed in Scripture. The utmost he can say is—'Such and such appears to me, at the present moment, to be the sense of the text before me:' and, if he is candid, he will add—'But perhaps, upon further consideration, and upon comparing these

with other texts, I may alter my opinion.' How far short, dear sir, is such mere opinion from the certainty of faith! I may here refer you to your own experience. Are you accustomed, in reading your Bible, to conclude, in your own mind, with respect to those points which appear to you most clear —'I believe in these, with a certain assurance of their truth, and an absolute security that they cannot be false;' especially when you reflect that other learned, intelligent, and sincere Christians have understood those passages in quite a different sense from what you do? For my part, having sometimes lived and conversed familiarly with Protestants of this description, and noticed their controversial discourses, I never found one of them absolutely fixed in his mind, for any long time together, as to the whole of his belief. I invite you to make the experiment on the most intelligent and religious Protestant of your acquaintance. Ask him a considerable number of questions on the most important points of his religion; note down his answers while they are fresh in your memory. Ask him the same questions, but in a different order, a month afterwards, when, I almost venture to say, you will be surprised at the difference you will find between his former and his latter creed. After all, we need not use any other means to discover the state of doubt and uncertainty in

which many of your greatest divines and most profound scriptural students have passed their days, than to look into their publications. I shall satisfy myself with citing the pastoral charge of one of them, a living bishop, to his clergy. Speaking of the Christian doctrines, he says—'I think it safer to tell you *where they are contained*, than *what they are*. They are contained in the Bible; and if, in reading that book, your sentiments concerning the doctrines of Christianity should be different from those of your neighbour, or from *those of the church*, be persuaded, on your part, that infallibility belongs as little to you as it does to the church.' (Bishop Watson's charge to his clergy in 1795.) Can you read this, my dear sir, without shuddering? If a most learned and intelligent bishop and professor of divinity, as Dr. Watson certainly is, after studying all the Scriptures and all the commentaries upon them, is forced publicly to confess to his assembled clergy, that *he cannot tell them what the doctrines of Christianity are*, how unsettled must his mind have been! and, of course, how far removed from the assurance of faith! In the next place, how fallacious must that rule of *the mere Bible* be, which, while he recommends it to them, he plainly signifies will not lead them to a uniformity of sentiments one with another, or even with their church!' pp. 76—78.

To the latter part of the above paragraph, that is, respecting the sentiments of Bishop Watson, Mr. Grier has made a particular reply; showing that Dr. Milner has been guilty of the usual Popish trick, of omitting a very material clause in the sentence; in which Dr. Watson told his clergy very plainly, that *he knew* what the Christian doctrines were *to him*, as they appeared in the Bible; but he did not wish them to take them upon his authority, but to search the Scriptures for themselves. This is certainly very different from declaring that he *did not know* what the Christian doctrines were, as Dr. Milner insinuates.

Yet while I condemn Dr. Milner's Jesuitical trick of suppressing part of the sentence in which Dr. Watson expresses his sentiments, I must so far agree with him, that the bishop's language, if not the language of doubt, is at least that of hesitation. Dr. Watson was neither the most sound nor the most spiritually minded of Christian bishops. From his Theological Tracts, as well as from the account which he has given of himself in the history of his life, published since his death, I suspect that he really did not know the Christian doctrine in its Divine simplicity; because he would philosophize about it as about everything else, instead of becoming as a little child, as every one must become who will receive and really understand

the truth of the gospel. The fault was not in the Divine word, but in the proud and carnal mind of the self-seeking philosophical prelate, who, in the might of his understanding, would not descend either to receive or communicate instruction by what the apostle Paul calls the foolishness of preaching, the plain apostolic testimony, concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Let Dr. Milner make the most he can of such an author, and of all whose faith stands in the wisdom of men, not in the power of God. The Protestant religion can maintain its ground much better without the aid of such men than with it. I mean no disparagement of the popular and useful works of Bishop Watson, in opposition to the infidel writings of Gibbon and Paine, which contain a masterly defence of the Christian revelation; but one may write ably and unanswerably on the subject of Christianity as a whole, while yet his mind refuses to submit to its Divine and self-denying truths when presented in detail. Many a brave man has ventured his life in defending the walls of a city in which he had no inheritance; and it is a melancholy reflection, that many a man of transcendent ability, like Dr. Watson, has spent his life in speculating about Christianity as a system, and even in defending the outworks of the city of God, who yet would not descend to taste of the living and life-giving stream that flows in the midst of it.

Passing from this, I come to reply to what Dr. Milner says about the doubt and uncertainty which every Protestant must necessarily feel, because he trusts to the Bible alone. This Dr. Milner thinks he has established beyond contradiction: and he triumphantly adduces the authority of a learned brother of his own to prove that a Protestant *cannot make an act of faith.* I dare say few Protestants ever think of such a performance, or so much as know what it is. I shall therefore insert it here, *verbatim*, from the Douay Catechism, that all my readers may be aware of the mighty achievement, which none but a Papist can perform. "ACT OF FAITH.—O great God, I firmly believe all those sacred truths which thy holy Catholic church believes and teaches: because thou, who art truth itself, hast revealed them. Amen." This is the sum total of a Papist's belief; and it is in fact no belief at all, but what almost every heathen believes, namely, that there is one God, and that he is truth itself. To profess to swallow in the lump all that the Catholic church believes and teaches, does not imply, much less does it express, a belief in any one doctrine; for it does not so much as imply a theoretical knowledge of any doctrine or fact on which Christianity is founded, except the being of God, and his character of truth. This is the vast advantage which the church of Rome possesses over Protestants, namely,

certainty as well as unity of faith. But in this respect, Mohammedans have the advantage of Papists, for their act of faith is more simple: it is expressed in nine words—"There is one God, and Mohammed is his prophet." Dr. Milner and all Popish writers boast, that in every part of the world you will receive the very same answer from a Catholic, when you ask him about his faith; but as the same happens with every Mohammedan, it proves nothing in favour of the church of Rome. It rather excites a suspicion that she is very nearly allied to the false prophet of the east; for both alike deprecate the impertinence of the common people being more particular in their belief, or inquiring into their religion in detail.

I have seen somewhere a Papist highly commended for the following discreet answers to certain questions about his faith. Quest. "What do you believe?" Ans. "I believe what the church believes." Q. "What does the church believe?" A. "The church believes what I believe." Q. "Well then, what is it that both you and the church believe?" A. "We both believe the very same thing." It was impossible to get more *out of him*, for there was no more *in him*. He knew no more about Christianity than a Hottentot before the missionaries went to Africa, except, indeed, that he bore the name of Christian, which only increased his guilt, and would

make his condemnation more dreadful than that of any mere heathen. The monstrous wickedness of the church of Rome appears here in a very striking light. She takes the Bible declaration, that if a man believe not he shall perish: which in the Bible refers to the truth of the Divine testimony about Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners, which is the only thing which connects a man's believing with his salvation; but instead of presenting the Divine testimony to men for belief and salvation, as the apostle did, and as consistent Protestant teachers do, the church of Rome presents herself, and herself alone, to be believed in, under the penalty of eternal damnation; for this, and nothing else, is the import of the "act of faith," which she teaches all her children to make—"I firmly believe all those sacred truths which thy *holy church believes and teaches*." By repeating this to himself with suitable seriousness of mind, a Papist is deceived into a confident persuasion that he is a believer and a true Christian, in the Bible sense of the words; while, in reality, he believes nothing at all upon Divine authority; and is, therefore, as destitute of that faith which is connected with salvation, as those who never heard of a Saviour, or even those who, having heard, reject him. A deceived heart turns such persons aside from the only method of

salvation. They incur the curse pronounced against the man that trusteth in man; but to the church and her false teachers belongs the greater condemnation.

This is the boasted certainty of the church of Rome, as opposed to the doubt and uncertainty of Protestants. It is the certainty of falsehood, if the reader will allow a seeming contradiction; for there is such a thing. It is possible to believe a lie with a full assurance of its truth; which was no doubt the case with Eve, when her faith in the serpent effected the ruin of the world. So, when one has been persuaded to receive implicitly the word of a fellow creature, or of any company of fellow creatures, called the church, with regard to matters of Divine revelation, he may feel fully assured of the truth of that which will eventually prove a lie. This is particularly the case of those who have had the truth of the gospel presented to them, but who did not like it. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for *this cause* God shall send them strong delusion, that they should *believe a lie:* that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," 2 Thess. ii. 10--12. From the connexion of the passage, there is an evident reference to the wicked one, who came with signs and lying wonders, and with

all deceivableness of unrighteousness, which very plainly points out the character of the church of Rome.

In reply to what I have said about the general, unmeaning profession which is made in their "act of faith," I shall be told that in her catechisms the church of Rome lays down and explains every article in the apostles' creed, the ten commandments, the seven sacraments, etc. It is true; but still in such a way, that the common people must receive all these things in the sense which the church imposes, and in that sense only, so that they are not articles which any one believes upon his own conviction; for if they were to think, and examine, and reason about them, their boasted unity and certainty would soon be at an end; and they would exhibit as great variety of sentiment as Protestants do; which is in fact the case among the learned of the church of Rome, with whom there is not, and never was, more unity of sentiment than among their neighbours.

According to Dr. Milner, the matter comes shortly to this point:—Papists have no *doubts* with regard to the truth of their religion, because they believe the church. Protestants have no *certainty* of the truth of their religion, because they believe the word of God. Let Papists shuffle as they please, this is the issue to which they must come at last. I perfectly agree with Archbishop Wake, whose words

Dr. Milner has quoted:—"When I give my assent to what God has revealed, I do it, not only with a *certain assurance* that what I believe is true, but with an *absolute security that it cannot be false*." I am here entitled to assume as admitted, that the Holy Scriptures are the word of God; for that is not directly denied by Dr. Milner; nay, he tells us, (*Let.* xi. p. 112,) that "Catholics, believing in the tradition of the church, as a *Divine rule*, are enabled to believe, and do believe, in the Scriptures, with a *firm faith*, as the certain word of God." Nothing of the nature of certainty can exceed that with which I regard the Divine record; that is, every truth and fact contained in the Bible. I doubt many things which the church of Rome teaches, because they are supported by mere human testimony; I deny many others, because they are opposed to the Divine testimony; but I cannot, without renouncing sense and reason, as well as religion, entertain a doubt of any thing which God has revealed.

Yet Dr. Milner does not hesitate to make the following absurd remark on Archbishop Wake's words:—"Now, the Protestant who has nothing to trust to but his own talents, in interpreting the books of Scripture, especially with all the difficulties and uncertainties which he labours under, according to what I have shown above, never can rise to

this *certain assurance* and *absolute security*, as to what is revealed in Scripture." In reply to this, I remark, first, that the Protestant puts no trust in "his own talents," in reference to what is here supposed. His trust is in the faithfulness of God, who will tell him nothing but the truth; and in the goodness of God, who will tell that truth, and who has told it, in language level to the meanest capacity. Secondly, "interpreting the books of Scripture" is not a work to which men in general are called; and it has no necessary connexion with the belief of the gospel, by which alone sinners are saved, and constituted Christians in the Bible sense of the word. That which is perfectly plain and intelligible requires no interpretation; and that this is the character of the gospel record is experienced by all who receive it. It is a revelation of mercy to sinners deserving to perish. It comes from the Father of mercies as a proclamation of pardon, and peace, and reconciliation, to the very chief of sinners. It tells them that, for the sake of Christ's obedience and sufferings, God will pardon any man, and every man, who will take the benefit of this general proclamation of pardon; that is, every man who believes what is thus brought to view, and urged upon him in the word of God. Those who believe enjoy the benefit of it in their own personal salvation; they rely upon its truth with infallible

certainty; and, by the fruits of the Spirit, they have a witness in their own hearts, that that word must be true which has turned them from sin to holiness; and which, instead of anxiety and dread of a judgment to come, has given them the peace of God, and the assured hope of a blessed immortality. Here is an *evidence* and an *assurance* which is altogether unknown to those who receive their religion on mere human authority, though it be the authority of a body that impiously calls itself the "Holy Catholic Church."

Suppose the case of a man condemned to death for certain crimes against the state; and suppose the king, influenced by certain considerations, to grant a pardon, and cause the same to be intimated in the usual terms: does any one imagine that, in such a case, the poor criminal would not be able to understand, or to take the benefit of such a message, because he had not talents to interpret all the statutes of the realm, or even the law relating to the royal prerogative of which he enjoyed the benefit? Certainly the criminal to whom the pardon came would find the message of mercy plain enough. He would take the benefit of it; and he might study the laws and their interpretation afterwards if he pleased. Now, it is impossible for the king, or his secretaries of state, to draw up the terms of a pardon to a condemned crimi-

nal, in language more plain and explicit than Christ and his apostles have published the proclamation of mercy to sinners. For the truth of this, I appeal to all who have been really convinced that they are sinners, such as the word of God describes all men to be by nature and practice, and who have taken the benefit of the proclamation of mercy. I mean all who believe the gospel; in receiving which they had not to *interpret* a doubtful message, but to submit to what proved itself to be of God, by its suitableness to their case, and its bringing that relief which none but God could give.

Dr. Milner, and all such writers, and worldly men in general, do, however, refuse their assent to such doctrine as this. They are confounded by its very plainness and simplicity. And the reason is, they do not consider themselves such sinners in God's sight, as to resemble the condition of a condemned criminal; and, therefore, they cannot comprehend what a proclamation of mercy has to do with them. As I am not conscious of having done any thing to subject me to death by the laws of the land, if a message were to come to me from the king, under the great seal, bearing that he had been graciously pleased to remit the sentence of death upon certain considerations, I should probably say there was some mistake here; that I was not the person intended; and if

any one would insist upon it, that I was the very person, I should be unable to understand what was meant, and should probably feel deeply offended. Now this is the very reason why the gospel message is so generally misunderstood. It takes for granted that those whom it addresses are condemned criminals in the sight of God, on account of their manifold transgressions. To those who are not really convinced that such is their condition, the gospel will ever be unintelligible, and, in general, offensive. Popery promises to save men in a way more palatable; but the day will declare how many millions she has thus seduced to their everlasting perdition.

SECTION VI.

THE grand art by means of which Dr. Milner succeeds in bewildering and deceiving his readers, is to present one thing to their minds as an important subject of discussion, and then to make all his discussion relate to another and a quite different thing. It requires no small degree of art to do this dexterously, and few men but such as have been bred in the Jesuit school can do it to purpose. The "true religion" is what Dr. Milner proposes as the subject of his writing, and his professed object is to show how this may be found out. He takes care, however, not to tell his readers that the true religion is the

knowledge of that by which a sinner is saved, and taught how to serve God acceptably; for this is expressed in few words, and exhibited in almost every page of the word of God, in language level to the capacity of a child, as I hope I have proved in my late numbers. But all Dr. Milner's discussions, for I cannot call them arguments, relate to something entirely different; and to something so general and undefined, that no man can say what it is, except that it is what "the Catholic church believes and teaches."*

We may, perhaps, guess at what he means, from what he says about the doubts and uncertainty of Protestants. In an extract which I gave in the last section, he lays it down as an indisputable fact, that Protestants are certain of nothing in religion; and this may be true of such Protestants as he condescends to converse with, and of such as choose to spend their time conversing with him. In a country where the Protestant religion is established, the name indicates no more than external conformity to the established religion, or to that of such as are called Protestant

* This is what in Italy is called *fides carbonaria*; that is, the collier's faith. The person mentioned in page 76, as making the truly *Catholic* profession, "I believe what the church believes," etc., was, it seems, a collier: and this gave the designation to that most perfect kind of implicit faith, which certain great Romish doctors consider the sum of necessary and saving knowledge in a Christian. See Campbell's Lect. Eccl. Hist. Lect. xxiii.

dissenters. In many instances, it does not indicate even so much; for many are called Protestants who do not even externally conform to the rites of either the established worship, or of any mode of separation from it; many who, in short, do not believe in revealed religion, but who are content to be called Protestants, merely that they may not be taken for Papists. It is needless to expect that such men should be certain of any thing, and it is a very common Popish trick to set down their doubts and scepticism to the account of Protestantism. The infidelity of such is quite inexcusable upon any Christian, and upon any Protestant principle; but for every religious purpose it is just as good as Popish faith; I mean the implicit belief of any thing that the church teaches upon her own authority: and with all the other crimes which the church of Rome has to answer for, I am persuaded a dreadful account stands against her on the ground of the many infidels she has made by her impious caricature of Christianity.

But there is a larger class of nominal Protestants, who take the name merely because it designates the established religion, or that of the sect in which they have been brought up. The former believe in the Protestant religion because it is the established one, and perhaps the latter believe it for the very opposite reason, that it is not established. The

traditional faith of the one is no better than that of the other; and as they have not made the true religion a matter of personal interest, they are almost as ignorant of what it really is, as any Papist can be. He who makes religion a personal matter, and who really believes the truth which brings peace and salvation to his own soul, knows with infallible certainty what that truth is; and if he were asked questions about it every day of his life, he would give substantially the same answers. But Dr. Milner takes care never to bring this fact to view; and, to do him justice, I believe he does not know that there is such a thing. He has no idea of a man resting with entire confidence upon the bare word of God, though this was the only thing that supported the mind of an apostle when about to be put to death for the faith which he believed and preached: "*I know* whom I have believed," (or trusted, Marg. read.) "and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," 2 Tim. i. 12.

I suspect that Dr. Milner has seldom, if ever, come into contact with Christians of this description; for, if he had, he would have found them perfectly certain and unanimous in the profession of their faith, which is not a mere system of speculative opinions, sound or unsound, not a mere agreement in the understanding of a few doubtful passages of

Scripture; but an entire submission of mind and heart and conduct to the will of God, as plainly made known by the general tenor of his word. This, I say again, is the true religion, as it exists in those who believe the gospel, that is, who are Christians in the Bible sense; and I should like to hear what Dr. Milner can object to the proposition.

He endeavours, however, throughout his whole work, to make the true religion appear something very different from this. With him it is a system of opinions and dogmas, which a man must believe upon the authority of the church, without presuming to think differently upon any of them from what the church is pleased to dictate. "The faithful," that is, all good Papists, submit to these conditions; and thus they are all agreed, and all undoubtedly certain of the infallibility of their creed. Taking it for granted that the faith of Protestants rests upon a similar foundation, and that their religion is no better than a system of opinions, Dr. Milner thinks he obtains a great triumph when he finds a difference of opinion among Protestants, and when he finds that the same persons are not always of the same mind, even with regard to the same things. Hence the silly cavil contained in a quotation from him, which I gave in the last section: "The utmost he (a Protestant) can say is, 'Such and such appears to me, at the present moment, to be the sense of

the text before me;' and, if he is candid, he will add, 'But perhaps, upon further consideration, and upon comparing these with other texts, I may alter my opinion.' How far short, dear sir, is such mere opinion from the certainty of faith!" This is the way in which the vicar apostolic glides away from the subject, and bewilders his readers. The question is, What is the true religion? and had he proved that Protestants were necessarily uncertain of this, he would have done something to serve the cause of Popery. For instance, had he put the question to a Protestant thus: "You know you are a transgressor of God's holy law, and that you deserve everlasting damnation, how do you expect to escape the punishment which your sins deserve?" If the Protestant had replied, "My present opinion is, that Christ died for the ungodly, such as I am, and that I hope to be saved through him; but perhaps, upon further consideration, I may alter my opinion." If, I say, Dr. Milner were to find this the current language of Protestants, I should agree with him that there was here not only no certainty, but no faith. This, however, is not the language of any one who believes the gospel. "I know whom I have believed," is the triumphant language of the man who relies upon the "faithful saying" of Him who cannot lie; and though the devil and his agents on earth may perplex and tempt him, it is not in the

power of both united to shake him from this foundation.

But Dr. Milner's triumph proceeds upon the supposition that a Protestant may not be sure of the meaning of *certain texts;* and that, though he has his mind made up about them for the present, he may see cause to alter it upon obtaining further information. What is there in this that may not happen to any honest man and which must have happened to Dr. Milner himself, if ever he read the Bible, and presumed to exercise a thought about what he read? The question is not about the *truth* of what God has revealed, for of that no Christian entertains any doubt; it is merely about the *meaning* of certain texts which he has not been pleased to reveal very clearly, and the perfect understanding of which is not necessary for our future salvation or present comfort. For instance, it is a question among Protestants, and, I suppose, among Papists too, who Melchisedec was. I have my opinion at present, but I may see cause to alter it; and so, I suppose, every man will say that reads what is said of him in the Old and New Testament, and who spends an hour in thinking about it. But this implies no doubt, or uncertainty, or want of faith; for the question does not relate to a matter of faith, seeing it is not revealed. That Melchisedec was an illustrious type of Christ is plainly revealed. Of that, therefore, I have

no doubt; but who, and of what family he was, is not revealed, and I am not required to believe any thing about it. I may have one opinion to-day and another to-morrow, without indicating any doubt or uncertainty about any fact or doctrine of Divine revelation. The same remarks will apply to other passages of Scripture, especially with regard to the meaning of prophecies not yet accomplished; and because Protestants are not all of one mind with regard to such things, and because individuals may see cause to change their opinion, and give one answer to a question now, and a different one a month hence, Dr. Milner, in his profound wisdom, comes to the certain conclusion that no Protestant can be sure of what he believes.

I grant that among Protestants there are differences of opinion upon very important subjects, and that even among those who are agreed in their views of Christian doctrine, worship, and practice, there are various degrees of clearness of apprehension of Divine truth, as well as of stedfastness in maintaining and zeal in propagating it; yet all who believe the Divine truth on the footing of the Divine testimony, are substantially of the same mind with regard to it; for, as it is one in itself, it is uniform in its effects. It produces peace of mind, love to God and man, and holiness of heart and life, whatever be the external form of the church or churches to

which they belong. I do not say that in this respect Protestant churches are all alike agreeable to the word of God, or that the order and worship of all are alike calculated to edify, and promote the other ends of Christian fellowship; but differences in this respect do not break the spiritual union of all who believe in Christ, in different churches, any more than difference of temper, and different degrees of knowledge, break the union of individuals in the same church. In short, all who receive the truth as revealed in the Bible, speak of it in the same manner; it teaches them to pray for the same things; with regard to the essence of Christianity they are perfectly of one mind; and they are so in consequence of every one's own personal conviction of the truth which has brought salvation to himself in particular. Thus, to use the language of the New Testament, they are all one *in Christ;* which is certainly a more glorious union than that of Papists, which, by their own account, is merely being one in *the church.* Theirs is not a union in faith, from a conviction of the truth of Christ's word, but a mere carnal image of unity in the implicit belief of what the church teaches, without any more personal conviction of the truth of what they believe, than if they had no personal interest in it.

But, after all, the thinking and reasoning part of the church of Rome have not even

this carnal image of union. It is only the ignorant vulgar that enjoy this happy privilege; for the learned are as little agreed in sentiment as the same class in any other communion; of which the most abundant evidence is to be found in the long-continued warfare between the Franciscans and Dominicans, and the Jansenists and Jesuits; besides the endless skirmishing of innumerable smaller bands: and it was part of the cunning policy of the court of Rome to encourage and keep alive dissensions among the principal orders, that no one might gain so much strength as to be able to contend with the "head of Catholic unity," who connived at every species of hostility among his children, provided they maintained their allegiance to him.

On this subject, I shall adduce an authority which I am sure Dr. Milner will not reject, that is, the authority of his own great self, in reference to what may fairly be considered a fundamental article of Popish belief, namely, the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary. "The church," says he, "does not decide the controversy concerning the conception of the blessed virgin, and several other disputed points, because she sees nothing absolutely clear and certain concerning them, either in the written or the unwritten word, and therefore leaves her children to form their own opinions concerning them."—

Letter xii. p. 129. Here it is admitted, that, notwithstanding the infallibility of the church, there are several disputed points which she cannot determine. What advantage, then, has she over other churches who lay no claim to infallibility? But what I advert to here is an article of vital importance, which Dr. Milner tells us the church cannot, at least does not, decide; that is, "the conception of the blessed virgin." Now, surely, if the church has the power of deciding anything, it ought to be a matter of such immense importance. It is well known that the virgin Mary is an object of worship throughout the whole church of Rome, next to the sacred Trinity. There are several devotional writers that place her upon an equality at least with Jesus Christ, and some that exalt her above him; but I shall not ground my remarks upon the horrible and impious extravagances of certain "holy saints," whom even Dr. Milner would blush to acknowledge. I shall state his own faith on this subject, and then show how cruel a mother the church of Rome is, seeing she leaves so dutiful a son in a state of uncertainty with regard to the original purity of this object of his devout invocation. Addressing his intended convert, James Brown, Esq., he says—"You believe also that, among the saints of God, there is one of super-eminent purity and sanctity, pronounced by an

archangel* to be, not only gracious, but full of grace; the chosen instrument of God in the incarnation of his Son, and *the intercessor with this her Son*, in obtaining his first miracle, that of turning water into wine, at a time, when his time for appearing in the world by miracles was not yet come, John ii. 4. It is impossible, as one of the fathers says, to love the Son without loving the mother; *beg then of her*, with affection and *confidence*, to intercede with Jesus, as the poor Canaanites did, to change the tears of your distress into the wine of gladness, by affording you the light and grace you so much want. You cannot refuse to join with me in the angelic salutation: 'Hail, full of grace, our Lord is with thee;' nor in the subsequent address of the inspired Elizabeth: 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,' Luke i. 42. Cast aside, then, I beseech you, dear sir, prejudices which are not only groundless, but also hurtful, and devoutly conclude with me in the words of the whole Catholic church upon

* I suspect Dr. Milner is here guilty of falling into an error in which he has the countenance of many Protestants. Where does he find in Scripture that the heavenly messenger who came to Mary is called an *archangel?* or where does he find this title given to any creature? There is only one to whom the title is given; and he is styled emphatically THE Archangel; meaning, no doubt, the Lord of angels. The "voice of the Archangel" is evidently the same thing as "the trump of God," 1 Thess. iv. 16.—[See Witsius' Miscellanea Sacra.—ED.]

earth: *Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."—Letter* xxxiii.

Here Dr. Milner tells us enough to let us see that he believes the virgin Mary to be omnipresent and omniscient, seeing the whole Catholic church address prayers to her, which prayers she hears and answers, and procures the tears of distress to be turned into the wine of gladness to those who devoutly call upon her. Yet he says the church has not determined the question of the conception of this one who hears prayer from all the ends of the earth; that is, whether she was really born in sin like other women, or whether she was not favoured with a special exception from the moral pollution which attaches to the rest of the human race. Now it is certain that a great part of the church of Rome believe, and stoutly maintain, that she was born without sin as really as Jesus was, and that in order to her bearing him without sin, it was absolutely necessary that the same should have happened to herself. This is a fundamental article of faith with the Franciscans, though denied by the Dominicans. The original Jesuits agreed with the Franciscans; but their faith in general is what suits them best to avow where they happen to reside; and where it is not convenient to make an explicit declaration of what they believe on this point, they escape by saying,

like Dr. Milner, The church has not determined it.

But why has she not? It is surely a matter of more importance than fifty things which she has determined. If the Franciscan doctrine be true, it leads to some very strange consequences. If, in order to bearing the Saviour without sin, it was necessary that Mary should have been also born without sin, then, in order to the bearing of her, it was necessary that her mother should have had the same privilege; and, indeed, the worshippers of St. Ann are not far from asserting this; (see Prot. vol. i. no. 39;) and then the mother of Ann must also have been born without sin; and thus we shall get up to Eve herself, and arrive at the conclusion that, before she committed sin, she had a daughter, who was the mother of a race of sinless women, from whom the holy virgin descended. Thus the doctrine goes to set aside the whole Scriptures; and yet Dr. Milner gravely tells us that the church "sees nothing absolutely clear and certain" on this point, "either in the written or unwritten word of God," and therefore she has determined nothing about it. It is time, then, that she had done with the boasted certainty and unity of her faith, when she cannot so much as tell whether the object of the daily prayers of her devout children was or was not born in sin like themselves.

Among the mendicants [friars] in Spain and Portugal, the immaculate conception is believed more firmly than any article of Divine revelation. They have a book of three folio volumes on the subject, said to have been written by a nun, mother Mary, of Agreda, to whom the virgin appeared almost every night, and told some story of her own history, of which her immaculate conception, of course, bears a prominent place. "This book," says the author from whom I quote, "is still looked upon by the natives of both Spain and Portugal, as an immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and I have heard them call it, a thousand times, *un libro divino*." —"I have seen it, and even undergone the drudgery of reading it quite through."—"As I was reading these heavenly visions, a Dominican friar of my acquaintance chanced to enter the room: I asked his opinion of them, though I pretty well knew beforehand what answer he would give; he replied, with indignation in his countenance, that they were nothing but a heap of old wives' tales, and advised me, as a friend, not to waste my time in reading such trash. Now, you must not imagine from these expressions that the Dominicans are less bigots, or less adorers of our lady, than the Franciscans, except in the point of her immaculate conception, which happens to clash with the sentiment of their angelical doctor, Aquinas; for as to the rest,

they maintain that she was as free from actual sin as Christ himself."—"Not long after this, a Franciscan chanced to pay me a visit, and found me in the same employment. The moment he cast his eyes on the book, he ran to it, and gave it a most devout kiss, assuring me that every word in it was as true as the gospel; to which he added, with a heavy sigh, that the Dominicans were a pack of wicked wretches for attempting to depreciate so inestimable a treasure." A fine specimen of the unity that exists in the "one holy Catholic church!"

"When these Divine revelations made their first appearance at Rome, they were judged by the pope to be so excessively absurd and ridiculous, that he published a decree to prohibit the reading of them. This put the Spanish mendicants in such an uproar, that they stirred up the whole kingdom, and prevailed so far by their clamours and remonstrances, that the king himself was induced to interpose in favour of a book they had spent so many years in composing; for it was they who had inspired the nun. At this prince's request, the pope suspended his decree; and though he did not think it prudent to confirm these visions by his apostolic authority, yet, by a second decree, he permitted the faithful to read them for their private edification; which concession the people of Spain and Portugal have made so

good use of, that few families are to be found without them."—See *Authentic Memoirs concerning the Portuguese Inquisition, Letter* xii. London, 1761.

SECTION VII.

Dr. Milner argues that, while Protestants must ever be agitated with doubts with regard to the truth of their religion, Papists are perfectly at ease, because they rest with implicit confidence in the truth of what the church teaches. In the last sectsion I endeavoured to show that this was a vain boast; that, while all who really believe the word of God are certain of what they believe, and substantially of the same mind with regard to it, those who implicitly believe the church, without a personal conviction of the truth of what is told them, possess no more than a dead image of union and certainty; and that the learned among them do not possess even so much; for there are as many disputes among them as among Protestants. This is a fact known to all the world, though perhaps Dr. Milner would have denied it, if he had not found it convenient to tell the English Papists, that whatever their brethren in Spain believed about the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary, they were at liberty to believe what they pleased. Nay, though the Bible tells us plainly, that of the race of Adam, born in the

ordinary course of nature, there is *none* righteous, no *not one;* that *all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God; the church of Rome, clear-sighted as she is, cannot see anything in the *written* or unwritten word of God to determine, whether or not the virgin Mary was born in sin. They admit that she died; but whether she died on account of sin, or on some other account, the holy and infallible church cannot tell! There is not a Protestant child, who has received the first lessons of religious instruction, that could not answer this question, which has baffled the pope, and cardinals, and Dr. Milner himself: and yet they are the people who alone possess the prerogative of being infallibly certain of every article of faith!

But it is time to proceed to Dr. Milner's concluding and strongest argument, to prove how certain Papists are of the truth of their religion, while we have no certainty with regard to ours. It is at the conclusion of his ninth letter, and it runs thus:—"There can be no doubt, sir, but those who entertain doubts concerning the truth of their religion, in the course of their lives, must experience the same, with redoubled anxiety, at the approach of death. Accordingly, there are, I believe, few of our Catholic priests in an extensive ministry, who have not been frequently called in to receive dying Protestants into the Catholic church, while not a single

instance can be produced of a Catholic wishing to die in another communion than his own. O Death, thou great enlightener! O truth-telling Death, how powerful art thou in confuting the blasphemies, and dissipating the prejudices, of the enemies of God's church!" part i. p. 79. There are two notes appended to this paragraph, containing many great names, said to have been converts from Protestantism to Popery, among whom we find Anthony Ulric, Duke of Brunswick.

In his eleventh letter, Dr. Milner treats us with more to the same purpose:—"The same method which God has appointed to keep peace in his church, he has also appointed to preserve it in the breasts of her several children. Hence, while other Christians, who have no rule of faith but their own fluctuating opinions, *are carried about by every wind of doctrine*, and are agitated by dreadful doubts and fears, as to the safety of the road they are in; Catholics, being moored to the rock of Christ's church, never experience any apprehension whatsoever on this head. The truth of this may be ascertained by questioning pious Catholics, and particularly those who have been seriously converted from any species of Protestantism. Such persons are generally found to speak in raptures of the peace and security they enjoy in the communion of the Catholic church, compared with their doubts and fears before they embraced

it. Still, the deathbed is evidently the best situation for making the inquiry. I have mentioned in a former letter," etc. (referring to the quotation given above,)—"a challenge to the whole world, to name a single Catholic, who, at the hour of death, expressed a wish to die in any other communion than his own," p. 115.

The above extracts excite a number of reflections which will occupy the remainder of this section. It seems there are few priests of the Romish church, "in an extensive ministry, who have not been frequently called in to receive dying Protestants into the Catholic church." On this subject, my doubts are stronger than my faith; and I call upon Dr. Milner for a proof of his assertion. I have it declared by Bishop Cameron upon oath, that our own Mr. Scott* is a priest in a most extensive ministry; that there is none like it within the jurisdiction of the diocesan of the lowlands of Scotland; and I hereby challenge him to adduce a single instance of a real Protestant calling or sending for this priest at the hour of death, in order to be reconciled to the church of Rome, that he might have the benefit of dying in her communion. I am persuaded that nothing of the kind has occurred during the incumbency of this gentleman; but if he has indeed been called upon

* A Romish priest, then living at Glasgow, repeatedly mentioned in "The Protestant."—ED.

for the above purpose, in one single instance, I call upon him for the name and designation of the party; and if he shall furnish me with but one, the world shall hear of it, and all about it.

Dr. Milner is speaking of persons who, during their lives, entertain doubts of the truth of their religion. These are not truly Protestants; and, what is a more serious consideration, such persons are not truly Christians; for nothing can be more unchristian-like than to entertain doubts of the truth of the Christian religion. Dr. Milner will evade this by saying, he does not mean persons who entertain doubts of the *Christian* religion; "but those who entertain doubts concerning the truth of *their* religion." But this is admitting, and even pleading, that their religion is something different from the Christian religion; and, therefore, the boasted achievement of converting such persons to Popery, is merely turning them from one system of error to another.

Such persons are represented as experiencing "redoubled anxiety at the approach of death." And no wonder. They do not believe the Divine testimony concerning Jesus Christ. They have doubts about the truth of their religion; which is quite inconsistent with a belief of the gospel; and, in such a state of mind, they must be horribly anxious in the prospect of death; unless, as is often

the case, they be quite insensible of their sin and danger. These are the sort of persons of whom Dr. Milner boasts, as seeking, at the point of death, to be reconciled to the church of Rome, that they may die in her communion.

This furnishes a strong argument against that church. It presents her in the light of a mere empiric, who, by certain incantations, can perform cures better than any regular practitioner. The regular prescription of the word of God to sinners in the prospect of death, as well as to those just entering upon active life, is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, Acts xvi. 31;"—"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," Acts iii. 19. This is what we are authorized to say to the greatest sinners, even at the point of death; and the Lord may bless his own word for the salvation of the vilest, at the last hour, as no doubt he has done to many. But, in general, those who live in sin, are left to die as they have lived. They have, perhaps, no person about them who can tell them of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the ungodly; or, if they should be favoured by the presence of such, and if they should have the gospel of the grace of God stated to them ever so plainly and affectionately, their carnal mind, instead of being subdued, may revolt and rebel against it, as insulting to them, who, notwithstanding

innumerable transgressions, are still so far righteous in their own eyes, that they cannot submit to the gospel plan, or accept of salvation as the free gift of Divine mercy.

Now, Popery is just the thing that suits such persons. It flatters them with a hope of salvation, without the hard necessity of denying themselves, of forsaking their sins, and submitting to the righteousness of God. It is not wonderful, that persons who do not understand the gospel method of salvation, should submit to Popish teaching, which is so agreeable to the principles of our fallen nature. The mystery is, that so few, among thousands of merely nominal Protestants, should fall into the snare that is laid for them by a host of cunning seducers, in the form of Popish priests, who prowl about the country, seeking whom they may deceive. They tell the simple and the serious—those who seem to be concerned for the salvation of their souls, but who have not found peace of mind and hope towards God by the belief of his word, which is perhaps the melancholy condition of not a few,—that if they will become reconciled to the church, they will insure their eternal salvation: and as drowning persons will catch at a straw, in hope of being saved by means of it, so such persons as are here described will put implicit confidence in their ghostly advisers, and submit to their teaching and discipline, in the hope of finding that

peace which the word of God does not profess to give to any man, but in connexion with his being renewed from sin to holiness. The priest, as I have often said, promises peace of mind without this condition; and, considering how ignorant of Christianity many who are called Protestants are, it is not surprising that now and then an individual, alarmed by the prospect of death, should grasp at the peace and security which a priest promises with so much confidence, and seek admission to the church that professes to save him by certain operations, such as the sacraments, without his being obliged to renounce either his sins or his righteousness. The wonder is, that Popery has not more of such converts to boast of; and it is indeed a wonder that our Glasgow Papists cannot boast of a single instance. There are, no doubt, many among us who would like to go to heaven, who do not like the gospel way, but to whom the Popish way would be perfectly agreeable, were it not for the expense;* yet we might

* Two Papists lately ventured into a Protestant place of worship, in the neighbourhood of this city, where they heard the gospel of salvation by free grace. This was so different from what they had been accustomed to hear, that it excited their serious attention; and one was heard to say to the other, on retiring:—"Well, if what this priest says be true, I shall never go to chapel again; for here we are told that God will pardon our sins without *any money at all*." I do not boast of this as a conversion from Popery, for the man's mind does not appear to have risen any higher than the idea of escaping punishment without expense. Had he thought of the necessity of his forsaking sin, which, according

expect that persons would get over this difficulty when about to die, though it seems they cannot; for I assert again, that of that which Dr. Milner declares to be so common, I never heard of a single instance having happened in Glasgow; and I do not believe such a thing can be proved.

I shall here give an illustrious example of the sort of conversion of which Dr Milner boasts, and of the means by which it was effected. It is that of Anthony Ulric, Duke of Brunswick, whose case is cited by Dr. Milner himself, as an evidence of the truth of his statements. The duke took it into his head, in his old age, to be reconciled to the church of Rome, from which his fathers had separated. He had been brought up a Protestant; but never having known what true Christianity was, he fell into doubts, and began a *search* after the true religion, which, according to his own account, he pursued most systematically, until he thought he found it in the church of Rome. He wrote a book, or some one for him, entitled, "The Duke of Brunswick's Fifty Reasons for Preferring the Roman Catholic Religion to all other Sects." The following is his concluding and crowning reason, which may be considered as com-

to the gospel plan, is as necessary as having it pardoned, he would probably have preferred paying money to the priest as before. I mention this as probable; but, perhaps, I ought to hope for better things.

prising the substance of his whole Fifty:—"I observed that many sectaries, who had seemed for many years to be fixed in their persuasion, were converted towards the end of their days, and desired to die in the Roman Catholic faith. But never did I meet with any Catholic that wished to die in another religion. Now, it is chiefly at the hour of death that the soul opens its eyes into a clearer prospect of things eternal. For my own part, I resolved to live as I should wish to die; and, for that reason, I came to a resolution to embrace immediately the Catholic faith; because death is as certain as its hour is uncertain. Besides that, the Catholics, to whom I spoke concerning my conversion, *assured me that if I were to be damned for embracing the Catholic faith, they were ready to answer for me at the day of judgment, and to take my damnation upon themselves;* an assurance I could never extort from the ministers of any sect, in case I should live and die in their religion. Whence I inferred, that the Roman Catholic faith was built upon a better foundation than any of those sects that have divided from it."

Such was one of the most noble converts to Popery since the Reformation, and such was his crowning reason for being converted to what is falsely called the Catholic faith. It is not surprising that an old dotard, whose conscience was troublesome, should desire

such peace as the church of Rome promises to give; and seeing he had adopted the notion that the church and her priests were infallible, and could not tell a lie, it is not wonderful that he should have believed that they were able and willing to take his damnation upon themselves, if necessary, to allow him to escape, seeing, no doubt, he would pay them well for it; but I suppose it will appear to some of my readers very surprising that English Papists, in the nineteenth century, with the vicar apostolic at their head, should boast of such a convert, and hold forth to the world such an argument, or reason for his conversion; "that if he should be damned for becoming a Papist, they would answer for him at the day of judgment, and take his damnation upon themselves!" The impiety and the impudence of the thing are beyond all expression; yet it must be the sentiment of English Papists at this day, and probably one of the means by which they make converts, seeing the book is strongly recommended by Dr. Milner, and the edition before me was printed in Manchester, as lately as 1802.* This alone is enough to show that Popery has received no amelioration; and that even the intellectual condition of Papists is deplorably low, notwithstanding the advancement of science, and the general diffusion of knowledge all around them. Not

* It is kept in print, and is regularly on sale.—Ed.

a particle of light seems to have entered their minds. To things spiritual and moral, they are as much in the dark as their fathers were in the age of lead; and they exhibit at this moment such a prostration of intellect as we would scarcely expect to find among the most ignorant Hottentots.

Here I expect to be condemned by my polite and ultra-liberal readers, for using language too strong; but let them look at the passage again, and let them try, if they can, to find words sufficiently strong to condemn such diabolical villany. I should rather say *Popish* villany; for I believe there is nothing recorded of the devil in sacred or profane history that can match this. I never heard of *him* promising those whom he wished to deceive, that if they should be damned, he would take their damnation on himself. This consummate species of imposition was reserved to be practised by modern Papists, for the purpose of gaining converts to the church of Rome.

What is thus urged to prove the certainty of his highness' faith, shows, in a very strong light, that he had no certainty at all, but was agitated by doubts and fears. He was not satisfied by his previous forty-nine reasons. He catches hold of this last one; and upon it he is willing to venture his eternity. He is conscious that he has nothing but the word of fellow creatures to rely upon; but this

satisfies him, seeing he believes that if he is deceived by them they must be damned for him. Yet, after all, he is not clear about this, for his words bear that he *might* be damned first; and he trusts to their being able and willing to take the sentence upon themselves. A generous mind could feel no satisfaction in the reflection that others were damned in his stead. Had his highness *condescended* to take the Bible for his guide, he would have found that the principle which he avows was enough to condemn the whole system. Upon the gospel plan, there is no such thing as one man's escaping damnation at the expense of his neighbour's falling into it. Christianity knows of no substitution but that of Jesus Christ, who voluntarily put himself in the place of fallen man, that he might put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and having made atonement and reconciliation by his sufferings to the death, he rose from the dead to bestow the benefits resulting from his death upon all, of every nation, who should believe in him. One of these blessings is reconciliation and love to our fellow men, especially our fellow Christians. It is one blessed fruit of the reconciliation effected by Christ's death, that every one who believes and becomes interested in it, is taught to love his neighbour as himself. It is absolutely impossible that such a one should enjoy peace of mind from the reflection, that if he were

damned, his neighbour would take the sentence upon him, and suffer in his stead. This, however, is the grand consideration that gave peace to the mind of the Duke of Brunswick, whose example is in the strongest manner recommended by Dr. Milner for the imitation of his Protestant friends in England. Upon this ground alone, though there were nothing else, every intelligent reader will perceive that Popery is the very opposite of genuine Christianity.

His highness complains that he could never get the ministers of any sect to promise that they would take his damnation upon them, if he should die in their communion; from which he infers, that the Roman faith was built upon a better foundation than theirs. Now, had he possessed a particle of common sense, he would have come to the very opposite conclusion. He would have said, "These are honest men; they know what they are about; and they are careful not to promise what they may not be able to perform." Had they been deceivers and Jesuits, who had no higher end in view, than to make merchandise of his soul, they would have promised anything he pleased: but they knew that no man could stand in the place of another at the day of judgment; they knew that no man could escape damnation but in the way of being personally united to Christ by faith, and personally renewed from sin to holiness, of which

I suppose they saw no evidence in his highness; and therefore they would not flatter him with the false hope of his being saved by his merely remaining in their communion. The statement of the fact, under his highness' own hand, does great honour to the Protestants with whom he had conferred. It proves that they were not time-servers, but faithful ministers of Jesus Christ, who invites the high as well as the low to partake of the blessings which the gospel brings to their view; not in this communion or that communion exclusively, but by coming to the knowledge of the truth, and submitting to the righteousness of God.

One main pillar in the Romish idol temple is, that the salvation of men is secured by their *being in her communion*. Let poor simpletons submit to this, and the priests take all the rest upon themselves If they can prevail upon poor, ignorant, wicked persons, at the point of death, to believe in their miraculous powers, which may happen in some instances, for the sake of the false peace in which they would rather die than without any peace at all, they submit to be baptized and anointed by priestly hands, and absolved by certain Latin words from a priestly tongue; and then the poor sinner says, Peace, peace, to himself, when there is really no peace; and he goes down to the grave with a lie put into his mouth by his ghostly deceiver. Such are

the conversions of Protestants at the hour of death, which Dr. Milner boasts of as so frequent; but I again challenge Mr. Scott to produce a single instance of the kind under his ministry.

My mercantile readers understand what is meant by a guarantee commission; and they are aware that this is, or ought to be, in proportion to the degree of risk. No doubt, therefore, the Duke of Brunswick paid largely for the risk which the priests took upon themselves; and if this work of mine should ever reach a descendant of that illustrious house, from which our own royal family is sprung, I request that strict search may be made in the archives of the family, in order to ascertain what his highness really paid for the accommodation which the priests granted to him. It must have been something very considerable; and yet, if we can suppose that these priests received a pecuniary consideration, for taking the duke's damnation upon themselves, we must suppose them to have been infidels of the most abandoned description. In this, however, there is nothing worse than what happens every day, in their trafficking for the release of souls from purgatory.

SECTION VIII.

In taking leave of what Dr. Milner calls the

second false rule of faith, I remark, that I have not attempted to reply to all the nonsense which he has introduced; but have endeavoured rather to maintain the general principle, that the Bible alone is sufficient for the instruction of men in matters of religion; and that those who believe the heavenly doctrines which it contains, are certain of what they believe, and substantially agreed about it; while those who rely on the traditions of men possess no more than a dead image of certainty and unity; while in reality they have neither faith, nor unity, nor certainty about any thing, seeing they have no higher authority for what they believe than the bare word of creatures like themselves.

I come now to what Dr. Milner calls "the true rule," which he lays down in the following terms:—"The Catholic rule of faith, as I stated before, is not merely *the written word of God, but the whole word of God, both written and unwritten;* in other words, *Scripture and tradition*, and these *propounded and explained by the Catholic church.* This implies that we have *a twofold rule*, or *law*, and that we have *an interpreter* or *judge*, to *explain it*, and to decide upon it in all doubtful points." *Letter* x.

There is here, as usual, a little trick by which the unwary may be deceived. Dr. Milner professes to take as his rule "the whole word of God," by which he insinuates

that Protestants do not do so: and he introduces tradition as forming part of that word, as if this were admitted by Protestants, while yet they refuse to submit to it. Now I say, that Protestants receive the whole word of God, without the exception of a syllable or letter of it; and that his foisting in "tradition" as forming part of that word is begging the question in dispute, and which is denied by his opponent. To the whole word of God we implicitly submit; but this implies no submission to the immense heap of rubbish that lies under the name of tradition.

On entering upon the proof of his proposition, Dr. Milner lays down the following as an indisputable axiom:—"I enter upon this subject with observing, that all *written laws* necessarily suppose the existence of *unwritten laws*, and indeed depend upon them for their force and authority. Not to run into the depths of ethics and metaphysics on this subject, you know, dear sir, that in this kingdom we have *common* or *unwritten law*, and *statute* or *written law*, both of them binding; but that the former necessarily precedes the latter." *Letter* x. We are then favoured with a view of the law of England, which, according to Judge Blackstone, may be divided into *lex non scripta* and *lex scripta*, as Dr. Milner gravely tells us: but the Christian reader will naturally inquire, What has this to do with the "true religion," which is

not founded upon the laws of England, however good these are in their own place, and for their own purposes? For the "true religion," we must have recourse to the law and to the testimony, that existed many ages before England made any figure among the nations of the world. We are sure, therefore, that the laws of England can afford us no light while pursuing an inquiry of this kind.

Dr. Milner says that *all written* laws necessarily suppose the existence of *unwritten* laws, and depend upon them for their force and authority. For this he gives us no higher authority than his own word. To put him to the proof of his proposition, I ask him, whether the law of the ten commandments, which was written by the finger of God, upon tables of stone, on mount Sinai, necessarily supposed the existence of *another* law that was prior to it, but not written, and upon which this written law of the ten commandments depended for its force and authority? To be consistent, Dr. Milner must answer in the affirmative. He must maintain that there is another law antecedent and superior to that of the ten commandments. I shall feel extremely obliged to him if he will tell me what that law is.

I suppose he will refer me to the patriarchs, who lived before and after the flood, down to the time of Moses, when the law was first written: and he will tell me that these

patriarchs lived under the authority of *lex non scripta;* that is, the unwritten or common law; but this will not serve his purpose, unless he can show that this was something different from the written law of Moses—something superior to it, and from which the law of Moses derived its authority. I know he can show no such thing; and that what he asserts with so much confidence is a mere imagination of the carnal mind.

On this subject, however, I must dwell for a little, because one great argument which Papists advance for the authority of their tradition, is connected with the history of the patriarchs. They tell us, that the faithful had nothing but tradition to guide them for above two thousand years;* that is, from Adam to Moses; and why should not we take the benefit of tradition from the birth of Christ to our own time, which is a shorter period? I reply, that the argument is founded on a falsehood; for it is not true, that all or that any of the patriarchs had to depend upon mere tradition, in the sense in which Papists

* Dr. Milner's words are:—"It is, then, certain, that the whole doctrine and practice of religion, including the rites of sacrifice, and, indeed, the whole sacred history, was preserved by the patriarchs, in succession from Adam down to Moses, during the space of 2400 years, *by means of tradition:* and when the law was written, many most important truths, regarding a future life, the emblems and prophecies concerning the Messiah, and the inspiration and authenticity of the sacred books themselves, were preserved in the same way." *Letter* XI. p. 107.

use the word. The patriarchs were honoured by *direct* communications from God; and what he revealed to them, and they communicated to their families, was not human tradition, but Divine revelation, as much as the written word is; and it served all the purposes of Divine revelation until the law and the testimony were written. Supposing the moral law, and the promise of a Saviour to come as the seed of the woman, had been matters of mere tradition, they passed through so few hands, that they might have been preserved till the time of Moses without any great mixture of error; for some suppose that Methuselah was cotemporary with both Adam and Shem, and the latter was cotemporary with Isaac, so that the whole narrative of the creation, the fall, and the promise of redemption, came down to the family of Jacob through only four hands, whereas no apostolic tradition can have come down to us without having passed through ten times as many generations. But I do not admit that the family of Jacob received the knowledge of the will of God by such tradition, even through hands so few and so clean. God revealed his gospel to Enoch, to Noah, to Abraham, and to Jacob himself, who were all, therefore, inspired men, as much as any of the prophets or apostles were; indeed in Psalm cv. 15, they are called prophets; and their living voice supplied the place of a written word, until Israel went down

to Egypt; and even after this, for nearly a century, they enjoyed the ministry of Joseph, who was endowed with the prophetic spirit. If the children of Israel had at any time nothing but tradition to depend upon, it must have been during the short period that elapsed between the death of Joseph and the calling of Moses; when, no doubt, they were reduced to great ignorance as well as great misery; yet we do not know that they had no prophet among them even then. There is reason to think that Moses' own parents had a Divine intimation, when he was born, that led them to the means by which his life was preserved. Be this as it may, I hope it will appear from the above, that there is nothing in the history of the patriarchs who lived before the word of God was committed to writing, that can give countenance to the doctrine, that the word which has been written by inspired men, must depend, for its meaning and authority, upon the unwritten traditions which have come to us through many ages of gross darkness, and through hands polluted by every crime.

If I have made this intelligible, I hope the reader will be convinced that there is nothing in the history of the patriarchs, or in the state of religion in their time, that gives the least countenance to that sort of tradition on which the faith of the church of Rome is chiefly founded.

Now, with regard to the apostles, great stress is laid by Dr. Milner, and all Popish writers, on the command of Christ to go into all the world and preach the gospel—" by word of mouth," is added by Dr. Milner, though that is not in the commission as Christ gave it, and is not necessarily implied in the words, which are a command to publish, and make known, by whatever means. The additional words, however, are of great use to Popish writers, and they could not get on without them ; for as they take for granted that all their bishops and priests are successors of the apostles, and endowed with the same authority and power, they could not prove the authority of their oral teaching, without referring to that of the apostles. Now, there is no dispute about the authority of what the apostles taught by word of mouth. The question is, *What* is it that they so taught ? and where is it to be found ? Protestants maintain that it is all summarily contained in the New Testament: Papists maintain that a great mass of it was never written at all, but handed down from age to age, by word of mouth ; and what has thus come down to the present age, is as much the word of God as that which apostles wrote ; and it is expressly called by Dr. Milner " the unwritten word " of God. He represents this as analogous to the *lex non scripta*, the unwritten and common law of England ; and as this

gives force and authority to the written or statute law, so tradition gives authority and force to the written word of God.

This is the substance of some long and laboured paragraphs in Dr. Milner's work, which I would have given in his own words, had not his style been so extremely diffuse, that I cannot afford space for one-tenth of his verbiage. I am not, however, conscious of misrepresenting a single iota of his doctrine. Indeed his own words quoted in this section will be found to imply all that I have said. And thus the foundation of his faith and his certainty is that which no man would depend upon, if he had an acre of land, or the value of it, to be secured to himself and his heirs. Undisputed possession for a certain period will indeed allow a man to claim a piece of land as his own; but he will take care to put the fact upon record, if he desire to preserve his right. But here the church of Rome teaches her children to rest their eternal interests upon tradition; that is, a report of what was spoken eighteen hundred years ago, and has been transmitted by word of mouth through all the dark ages! I am verily persuaded Dr. Milner himself would not venture a shilling of his worldly property upon any thing that depended upon such evidence.

But does not the apostle Paul command Christians to obey tradition as well as the

written word of God? Does he not say to the Thessalonian converts, "Stand fast, and hold the *traditions* which ye have been taught, whether by *word*, or our epistle," 2 Thes. ii. 15? And again, in the third chapter of the same epistle, verse sixth, does he not command them to "withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the *tradition* which he received of us?" This is all very true, and readily admitted; and if Dr. Milner could tell us with certainty what these *traditions* were, and what it was that the apostle told the people by word of mouth, I would without hesitation receive it as the word of God: and if it did not evidently appear to be a thing of a temporary and local nature, I would say that it commanded the faith and obedience of Christians.

It cannot be doubted, that a great part of the oral teaching of the apostles related to things of a local and temporary nature; such as the condition of the Jewish converts, and the conduct that became them in their peculiar circumstances, in the prospect of the destruction of Jerusalem, and after that event had taken place. Having a living and divine oracle in the persons of the apostles, who spoke by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the Christians would have recourse to them for instruction and advice in every emergency. When personally present, advice and instruction would be communicated by word of

mouth; and when absent, by writing. Either way, the communication was of Divine authority, and as such it would be received by the individuals and churches to whom it was addressed.

It was not necessary that instruction with regard to every thing of a temporary nature should be committed to writing, seeing inspired teachers were continued to the churches as long as the occasion required; but that things of universal and permanent obligation were committed to writing we know by the fact, that such writings exist, with abundant evidence that they are the word of God. But whether that which apostles enjoined regarded things temporary or permanent, local or universal, it was imperative on Christians to obey, for the apostles spoke by the Spirit of God, whether it was by *word* or by epistle. That some apostolical instructions did relate to temporary things, is evident from the introduction of at least one of those things into one of Paul's epistles; and the reason seems to be, that application was made to him in writing, while he was absent, for advice relating to a matter of great importance at the time; and he gave his answer and his advice in writing, as we have it in the seventh chapter of 1st Corinthians.

Mistaking the design, and overlooking the occasion of this advice, many have understood the apostle as laying down the general

proposition, that it is better for both men and women to remain single than to marry, which is directly contrary to his own words; "I will that the younger women marry;" and, "Marriage is honourable in all," 1 Tim. v. 14; Heb. xiii. 4. It was, however, to be regulated by prudential considerations; and it was solely because of "the present distress," that he advised the Corinthian converts to abstain from marriage; though even this he does not lay upon any one as a command, but merely suggests it as an advice. I have made this digression in order to show that the churches were in the practice of consulting the apostles in cases of difficulty, with regard to matters of a temporary and comparatively private nature; and that it does not thence follow that the responses which they received, were of permanent and universal obligation, unless they have been recorded and delivered as such, in the apostolic writings.

But we will come to a better understanding of the subject by attending to the meaning of the word. *Tradition* is not a word of native English growth, but, like many others, has been transplanted from the Latin; and its meaning in English, according to Dr. Johnson, is, something delivered by *word of mouth* without written memorials, or any thing delivered *orally* from age to age. But this is not the meaning, at least not the whole meaning, of the Greek word of which tradition is meant

for a translation. Παράδοσις is the word which the apostle wrote, and it signifies, *precept, instruction, ordinance*, delivered *either orally* or *in writing*. See the Lexicons. But I have higher authority than that of any lexicographer; namely, that of the apostle Paul himself, who says, "Stand fast, and hold the traditions (παράδοσεις) which ye have been taught, whether by *word*, or our *epistle*." The precepts or instructions, therefore, to which he referred, had been communicated both orally and in writing; or might have been communicated either way.

Now, this brings us to this point, that when the apostle Paul exhorted the believers in Thessalonica, to hold fast the traditions (παράδοσεις) he meant the things which he had preached to them, and the things which he had written to them in his former epistle. He refers, in the first place, to what he had taught them *by word*. What this was we may learn from what is recorded of the ordinary topics on which the apostles preached; and we know that their preaching related chiefly, if not solely, to Christ's life, death, and resurrection; in other words, they preached the gospel of the grace of God—"how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." This is called "the word"—"the things *reported* unto you"—and "a faithful *saying*;—expressions of nearly the same import with what is meant by tradition, when stripped of the dress in which Papists

have disguised it. We know what this "word," or "saying," is, from a sermon which the apostle Peter delivered in the house of Cornelius, Acts x. 36—48. It is a narrative of Christ's life, death, and resurrection; and this he expressly called *the word;* that is, saying, report, tradition, if you will; for it is said, verse 44, "While Peter yet spake these words"—that is, while he was giving this narrative of facts, of which he had been a witness, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard *the word,*" which word was just this testimony concerning Christ. That Paul's preaching was in the same strain, we learn from the report of a sermon of his in Antioch, Acts xiii. 23—43, in which, along with a narrative of facts about Christ's death and resurrection, he tells the persons who listened to his preaching, that "through this Man was preached to them the remission of sins; and that by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."* From these two emi-

* The reader is requested to turn to the passages, and peruse them attentively. It is of more importance to be acquainted with the tenor of the apostles' preaching, than to study the style of any modern pulpit orator. It was the plain unincumbered doctrine of Christ crucified, that produced such wonderful effects by the preaching of the apostles; and it is the same doctrine, and nothing else, even now, that can be of any use in the way of converting sinners. The Moravians who went to Greenland, began to teach systematically. They descanted on the being and perfections of God—very proper subjects, most certainly, for an enlightened Christian assembly; but they made no impression upon the poor Greenlanders, whose minds were not

nent examples, and there are more in the same book, we may conclude that this was the substance of the preaching of all the apostles. It was by the power of this word or report, when accompanied by the blessing of the Holy Ghost, that sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, were converted, and "turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Companies of men and women so converted, were instructed to meet together, for the purpose of prayer, and for the observance of the other ordinances which God had commanded. These were the primitive churches; many of which were organized by apostles in person, others by evangelists acting under their direction. Among some of them Paul continued to preach for a considerable period; and to many of them he wrote letters in his absence; most of them, I believe, when he was a prisoner in Rome. In these letters he does not go over in detail the narrative of facts which he made the first subject of his preaching; he takes them for granted. He often alludes to them in a summary way; and again and again, he exhorts his correspondents to keep them in memory; to hold them fast, and on

prepared to take in such things. Almost in despair of doing any good, the missionaries began at last to speak about Jesus Christ, and his wonderful kindness and mercy to poor sinners; and this was found to melt the hearts even of the men of Greenland. (See *Crantz's History*.) The above anecdote is well known.

no account to let them slip out of their minds. In these was the "faithful saying," "the word," "the report," *the traditions*, which he had delivered to them by word of mouth, and of which he reminded them in every epistle. I say he *reminded* them of them, for it was not necessary that he should repeat them all in his letters, seeing they were detailed in the narratives called the Gospels, either published by this time, or about to be published. Before the publication of the Gospels, these things were all communicated by word of mouth, but it was by the mouth of inspired men. They ceased to speak, one by one, as their Master called them to rest from their labours; but they were not all removed till they had committed to writing the things which they had so long declared by their living voice. These are what we have in the New Testament; having which, we have their word, as really as those who heard them speak, and all the traditions which are of permanent use, and universal obligation among Christians. And I defy the church of Rome to adduce a single article of doctrine, or ordinance of worship, which she has derived from oral tradition, that is not contrary to, or inconsistent with, some part of the written word; and, therefore, it cannot be of God; for it is the height of impiety and blasphemy to say, that He commanded his servants to teach one thing with their pens, and a contrary thing with their mouths.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"—and is able to make "the man of God perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Christians can desire no more than the *word* which is able to make them *perfect*, which must itself be a *perfect word*. But Papists, dissatisfied with this, and seeking for something else, have landed themselves in ignorance, superstition, idolatry, and every evil work.

SECTION IX.

THE true rule of faith, according to Dr. Milner, "is not merely the written word of God, but the whole word of God, both written and unwritten; in other words, Scripture and tradition, and these propounded and explained by the Catholic church." In my last section I did little more than clear the way for the consideration of this proposition. Seeing, in two passages of one of his epistles, the apostle Paul makes use of a word which is rendered "tradition" in English, Popish writers are in the habit of citing his authority in favour of their traditions; but I showed that what he referred to were communications made by himself under Divine inspiration, including the apostolic testimony and report concerning Christ, as recorded in the gospel history: and, seeing Dr. Milner alleges that the ancient patriarchs received

all that they knew of religion for 2400 years from tradition, I showed that the patriarchs were themselves prophets, and received from God himself that religion which they communicated to their families; and thus it is evident that the Popish doctrine of tradition derives no countenance from apostles or patriarchs: and I might have added, that such traditions as the Papists plead for, were strongly condemned by Christ in his discourses to the Pharisees, who made void the law by their traditions, just as the Papists make void the gospel by theirs.

The simple statement of what Papists mean by tradition, might be enough to convince persons of common sense of the folly of depending upon it. It consists of certain doctrines and precepts, which Christ and the apostles are said to have spoken, but which were not committed to writing. These doctrines and precepts are said to have been delivered by word of mouth from one age to another, and to have come down to us as pure and uncorrupted as the written word contained in the Gospels and Epistles. Those who can believe this, must believe in the existence of a perpetual miracle, without any conceivable reason for miraculous interposition, seeing the object could have been accomplished by the ordinary means of writing. Dr. Milner, however, not only believes this certainty of traditional communication, but

he believes further, and stoutly maintains, that by this means the knowledge of Christianity might have been preserved and propagated in the world, though there had not been a word of Divine revelation committed to writing. No doubt, God could have done this, had he thought fit to preserve a succession of inspired men in all ages, as he did in the ages before his word was written; but what He could have done is no rule to us;—our business is with what he has done; and we know that he has given us his word in the Scriptures, with a command to receive and apply our minds to the understanding of it; that he has not commanded us to receive the traditions of men, but to beware of them; and, therefore, we feel upon sure ground when we rely on the written word alone.

The other arguments from Scripture in favour of tradition, are Christ's command to all men to hear the apostles: "He that *heareth you, heareth me;*" and, "If he neglect to *hear the church* let him be unto thee as an heathen man and publican." Now, I have admitted that it was the duty of all men to hear what the *apostles* said to them; but this has nothing to do with what other men have said, or may yet say; and Popish tradition consists entirely of what other men said. I deny that the apostles spoke a word of that which the church of Rome *propounds* as apostolical tradition. This is not asserting a negative; for

the church has condescended to mention what some of her traditions are, such as the mass sacrifice, purgatory, and prayers for the dead; and as these are directly opposed to what the apostles wrote, I am sure they formed no part of their oral teaching, for they both wrote and spoke under the influence of the Divine Spirit, who cannot teach contradictions. But suppose I had no such positive evidence on the subject; suppose it were all negative on that side, I am entitled to deny that of which there is no evidence. At any rate, the burden of proof rests with those who maintain the truth of tradition; and I challenge them to prove the genuineness of a single sentence ascribed to Christ and his apostles beyond what we have in the New Testament.

Ay, but says Dr. Milner, the apostles had their successors, and Christ included them when he said, "He that heareth you, heareth me;" and these words cannot be restricted to the apostles, for as they continued only for the ordinary period of human life, it was impossible that all nations and all ages could receive the gospel from them personally; therefore, Christ must have included their successors, who are the priests of the Catholic church, the depositaries of the faith, by whom the unwritten word of God, that is, apostolical tradition, has come down to us with infallible certainty.

These are not precisely Dr. Milner's words, but they are the substance of his argument. And I reply, first, that the apostles *as such* had no successors; which I showed at length in my reply to the "Catholic Vindicator·" and now, secondly, I maintain that there was no need of any successors to the apostles, or any to fill their place, after they had committed their words to writing, and gone to receive their reward. *Hearing* the apostles is not a mere acoustic operation; it is not the mere reception of sounds into the ear. Papists, indeed, argue as if it were nothing else; and thus it is that they degrade and carnalize every thing that they touch. They think it impossible to hear the apostles, unless the sound of their voice shall literally be received into our ears, or the sound of the voice of some person who pretends to be one of their successors. But in the Scripture sense of the expression, to hear the apostles, signifies the belief of their testimony, and submission to the ordinances which they appointed in their Master's name. Thus they are as effectually heard in their writings as they were by their living voice; and the submission of the heart and life to what they wrote, is obedience to the Divine command to hear them. When the voice from the excellent glory said, concerning Jesus himself, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him," the Divine command was, believe what he teaches, and obey what

he commands; and not merely to listen to the sound of his voice, which many did, who derived no benefit from it, because they would not obey his voice; and their not obeying it was the same as not hearing it. But he who really receives the truth which the apostles wrote, obeys the command to hear them; and, therefore, there was no need of successors, to tell us of something which they said, but did not write.

With regard to the priests, who call themselves successors of the apostles, and depositaries of the faith, the world is able to judge what credit is due to their testimony in relation to what the apostles are said to have communicated by word of mouth. None of them profess to have lived so long as to have been ear-witnesses of what any of the apostles personally taught; and therefore, supposing the present race to be as honest as it is possible for men to be, there can be no certainty with regard to any thing that they say has been handed down to them from the apostolic age. This objection gathers strength from the well-known character of the great body of the priests for more than a thousand years. There is a universal *tradition* on this subject, both oral and written, the truth of which no man can doubt; namely, that the state of morals among the priesthood was profligate in the extreme. This was so universal, and exceptions were so rare, that it was almost a

miracle to find a godly man among them. Now, suppose it were admitted that tradition contained nothing but sound doctrine for an age or two after the apostles, it must necessarily have become corrupted when taken up and transmitted by such corrupt men. They could not be the means of preserving, and the medium of communicating, holy doctrines and pure precepts, which condemned them, and must have been abhorred by them. Whatever came into contact with them must have been defiled. Water from the purest fountain will be found unsavoury after passing through a dunghill.

It may be admitted that, by the increase and general diffusion of knowledge, the character of the priests of the present day is not so bad, at least in Protestant countries; yet I would not trust much to their traditions. I shall suppose Dr. Milner to be one of the best of his order; yet, when I see that he asserts in his introduction that the bishop of St. David's wrote a catechism which taught men to "hate and persecute their elder brethren," and when I find that the said catechism contains no such thing, I am compelled to conclude, that tradition passing through such a mind may have received a bias that makes it of no value. If a man shall mistake, and grossly misrepresent what he reads with his own eyes, I can have no confidence in the accuracy of what he pro-

fesses to have received by his ears, though given only at second hand, much less when it has come through a hundred such hands; and this is the case with all that the Romish church *propounds* to her children under the name of the "unwritten word of God."

The next branch of the argument is that which requires men to hear the church. Papists with one voice maintain that this means the church of Rome; and that all men who will not hear and submit to her must be accursed. But she has not yet made it appear, and she never can make it appear, that she is here specially intended, any more than the church of England, or that of Scotland; for she had no existence, any more than these, when our Saviour gave that commandment. And the truth is, this command, Matt. xviii. 16—18, does not relate to any one church more than another, but to every particular church or congregation that may unhappily have an offending or immoral person among them. They are commanded to take certain steps to recover him from his error; and if they cannot prevail upon him, that is, if he will not *hear them;* they are commanded to consider him as a heathen and a publican; which implies no more than being excluded from the fellowship of Chistians, of which he showed himself unworthy. Any person who will read the passage carefully, will find that it contains no more than I have here stated; and yet

these words are repeated by every Popish writer to prove the supreme authority of the church of Rome;—"Let him *hear the church:*"—"If he refuse *to hear the church*," etc. Under these words she claims a right to *propound* for belief, and to enjoin for practice, whatever she pleases; and all who will not obey come under the anathema of those who refuse to hear the church!

The church of Rome has been very sparing in her information with regard to the particular doctrines and ordinances which she has received from tradition. I have mentioned one or two things which have been divulged as derived from that source, though most Popish writers endeavour to find Scripture for these too, which seems to intimate that mere tradition does not satisfy them. But, so far as I know, there is no publication, printed or manuscript, that contains a summary or detailed account of what the church believes under the head of tradition. It may be any thing, or it may be nothing, for what any man out of the church can tell; for the very writing of it would destroy it as a matter of *oral* tradition; and, therefore, Protestants can never know what it is. As for lay persons in the church of Rome, every one must receive it from the lips of his priest. It is that which the "Catholic church *propounds;*" and as this is too large a body to propound any thing, otherwise than by the mouth of its

official organs, every priest is the propounder of what he considers a Catholic tradition; which may be a mere whimsy of his own; and yet his people must receive it as infallibly true. Thus there may be as many whimsies as priests, all contradicting one another; for there is no authentic standard to which an appeal can be made, and by which an inquirer can satisfy himself who reports the tradition correctly.

But the "Catholic church," that is, the Popish priests, are not only propounders, they are also the explainers of both the written and unwritten word; and neither Scripture nor tradition is to be considered the rule of faith otherwise than as propounded and *explained* by them. This power of explaining sets every thing to rights; for let the articles of tradition brought to view be ever so contradictory, the explanation of a priest can reconcile them to one another so completely, that he will, if necessary, swear that they are the very same; just as a ghostly juggler can convert the December of one year into the June of another, when such conversion is necessary to serve a purpose.

I am aware that to these common sense arguments against Popish traditions, writers of that communion adduce the promise of Christ to be with his church to the end of the world, and the promise of his Spirit to lead them into all truth. These promises

they consider as belonging exclusively to the church of Rome, and as infallibly securing the priests, "the successors of the apostles," from ever falling into error. But this is again begging the question; it is an impudent assuming of the very thing that is denied, and which she is called upon to prove, but which it is certain she never can prove. Christ promised to be with *his* church to the end of the world; that is, with those who are separated from the world which lieth in wickedness, and who are devoted in heart and life to the service of God. Christ promised to be present with such to bless them; but it is as explicitly declared that the face of God is against them that do evil. It must, therefore, be against the church of Rome, which, like Ahab, has sold itself to do wickedly above all that ever pretended to be Christian. This all the world knows; and of this Dr. Milner cannot be ignorant. I beg leave, therefore, to remind him of the words of the Duke of Brunswick, which he quotes with approbation, and which are indeed words of wisdom, though partly quoted from an apocryphal book:—"Secondly, I made a strong resolution, by the grace of God, to avoid sin, well knowing that wisdom will not enter into a corrupt mind, nor dwell in a body subject to sin. Wisd. i. 4." I ask Dr. Milner, then, how wisdom could dwell in a body so thoroughly corrupt as he knows the church of

Rome to have been for many centuries? and how he or any man can believe that this is the church in which Christ promised to dwell by his Spirit to the end of the world? There is blasphemy in the very imagination of the thing, as it tends to represent Christ as the minister of sin, and dwelling in the temple of wickedness, while he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon sin. Yet so certain is Dr. Milner of the truth of those absurdities which I have been exposing, especially of the traditions propounded and explained by the church, that he tells us, at the conclusion of this branch of his argument, that if it were possible for him to be mistaken, he would lay the blame on his Maker! "Were it possible for me to err in following the Catholic method, with such a mass of evidence in its favour, methinks I would answer at the judgment-seat of Eternal Truth, with a pious writer of the middle ages: 'Lord, if I have been deceived, thou art the author of my error.' *Hugh of St. Victor*, p. 116." There is no arguing with a man capable of such impieties. This reminds us of what Mr. Burke said of the infidel Rousseau, that he wrote a book of Confessions, which he proposed to throw in the face of his Maker at the last day; but the infidel did not go so far as to say that he would lay the blame of his errors on his Maker; but merely to declare that he was as good a man

as any who should be present at the judgment-seat.

Having noticed the principal arguments in favour of tradition, which are drawn from Scripture, I shall now advert to one, which, I suppose, is founded on tradition itself:—"True it is," says Dr. Milner, "that the apostles, before they separated to preach the gospel in different nations, agreed upon a short symbol or profession of faith, called the *Apostles' Creed;* but even this they did not commit to writing: and whereas they made this among other articles of it, 'I believe in the holy church'* they made no mention at all of the Holy Scriptures. This circumstance confirms what their example proves, that the Christian doctrine and discipline might have been propagated and preserved by the unwritten word or tradition, joined with the authority of the church, though the Scriptures had not been composed; however profitable these most certainly are for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness." *Letter* x. p. 86.

What Dr. Milner here propounds under the positive assurance, that "True it is," is not an oral tradition to him, seeing he gives it on the authority of Rufinus, who had it from an earlier author, who had committed it to writing; but this author lived so long

* "The title *Catholic* was afterwards added, when heresies increased."

after the apostles, that he could know no more of their acts, from an authentic source, than we do. It was probably an oral tradition to him; but though it were more credible than it is, we are entitled to hold it as an idle tale, which can prove nothing, seeing itself requires first to be proved.

It was one of the evidences of the Divine mission of the apostles, that, without concert or formal agreement on any articles of faith, they all spoke the same things, and bore testimony to the same facts of which they had been witnesses. That this was the case is evident from the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles. They were not qualified to propound articles of faith till they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost; and then instantly they began to preach, and continued to preach, not in the measured terms of a previous systematic arrangement, agreed upon among themselves, but as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. Yes; but Dr. Milner says, that before they separated to preach the gospel in different nations, they "agreed upon a short symbol or profession of faith, called the *Apostles' Creed*." Now, what could be the use of this to them? The Holy Spirit continued with them, wherever they went, teaching them all to speak substantially the same things. To have made such an agreement would have indicated a jealousy of one another, or a doubt of the Spirit's re-

maining in them, which ought not to be supposed. It may be very well for uninspired men to arrange the truths of Divine revelation in a systematic form, in order to their satisfying one another as to their understanding and agreement with regard to Divine truth; but this was quite unnecessary for the apostles, who knew that they all spoke by one unerring Spirit.

If it be alleged, that they composed the Creed not for their own sakes, but for the use of the common people, I reply, that this work of all the twelve, if it were such, presents nothing half so useful as what may be found in the writings of any one of them who did write. I grant that this short symbol presents the leading truths of Christianity in very few words; but, taken by itself, without a previous acquaintance with these truths, it must be quite unintelligible and useless. Every Papist, I suppose, can say it from memory; but he acquires no more knowledge of the true religion from it, than if he had learned to say it backwards. Its articles are stated so concisely, that it is little else than a general index of Christian doctrines; so that the profession of it cannot ascertain what a man's real sentiments are, with regard to most of the things which it embraces. The truth with regard to the person of Christ is stated somewhat in detail; but of what follows no man could make any

thing, unless he had information from another source. "I believe in the Holy Ghost," is professing nothing, unless we know who the Holy Ghost is, and what is his part in the plan of our salvation. "I believe in the holy church" are equally words without meaning, in the mouth of a person who does not know what is meant by the words *church* and *holy*, in the New Testament. Papists understand one thing and Protestants another, by the very same expression; but neither would understand anything at all, if he had not previous information. And as for "the communion of saints," I suppose there are few Papists who can tell what it is. In short, it is confessed on all hands, that this Creed was inadequate as a standard of orthodoxy when disputes began to multiply. Hence it was found necessary to compose other and larger ones, such as the Nicene and Athanasian; and neither have they served the purpose of preserving unity among Christians, even in the same communion.

I conclude this section with remarking, that if Dr. Milner could prove the Creed to have been the work of the twelve apostles, I would turn it against himself, by showing that they knew nothing of a body called the *Catholic* church, seeing that word was foisted into the composition ages after their time.

SECTION X.

ONE principal mode of defence adopted by Popish writers is, to make it appear that their opponents hold the same principles with themselves; and they think their church fully vindicated if they can show that what is charged against them is allowed by any class of Protestants. If it were so, the Protestants who agreed with them could not attack them with a good grace; but in most instances, where such agreement is alleged, there will be found a great difference of principles, with only a slight resemblance in words.

Thus, on the subject of tradition, there is a sense in which Protestants use the word, and they admit the thing which it expresses, with certain modifications. What they understand by it, and the use they make of it, are very different from tradition in the Popish sense, which Dr. Milner cannot but know; yet he argues as if he did not know it; and he writes as if we were as much the slaves of tradition as himself. Thus he writes:—"With all their repugnance to tradition and church authority, Protestants have found themselves absolutely obliged, in many instances, to admit of them both. It has been demonstrated above, that they are obliged to admit of tradition in order to admit of Scripture itself. Without this, they can neither know that there are any writings at all dic-

tated by God's inspiration, nor which, in particular, these writings are, nor what versions or publications of them are genuine." *Letter* xi. p. 96. He then proceeds to tell us of certain articles of faith and practice which, he says, we have derived from tradition, to which I shall attend by and by. But I must first dispose of his assertion, that we are "obliged to admit of tradition in order to admit of Scripture itself."

The reader is requested to remember, that by tradition, Dr. Milner means something handed down, through eighteen centuries, by word of mouth, independent of written testimony. Now, I deny that Protestants depend upon such tradition for anything, or admit of it for any purpose whatever. But they do not reject the tradition of written testimony. They readily avail themselves of it, as furnishing rational evidence of the genuineness of the books of Scripture; that is, that they were written by the inspired men whose names they bear. I call it *rational evidence*, for it rises no higher. The belief of what this proves, is not the faith of the gospel; but it is evidence which satisfies reasonable men that there is no imposition in the matter; and that these books are really what they profess to be—a record of facts and doctrines concerning Jesus Christ, written by men whom he commissioned to publish his doctrine to the world.

If I were writing against avowed infidels, it would be incumbent upon me to prove that the apostles were inspired; but this is admitted by Dr. Milner; and therefore all that I have to show, is, how the tradition of written testimony affords rational evidence that the books which bear their names were written by them. Now, of this there is the written testimony of a host of authors, both friends and enemies of Christianity, who, while differing about many things, agree in this—that there were certain books received by Christians not of the church in Rome only, but all over the world, as undoubtedly written by the apostles. Some of these authors were contemporary with men who had been contemporary with some of the apostles; and they have incorporated in their writings many passages which assure us, that they had the very same narratives and epistles that we have in the New Testament. We know it to be impossible that forgeries should have gained such universal credit then, because we know it to be impossible now; human nature being the same, and the laws of moral evidence the same in all ages.

About the middle of the seventeenth century, "*one* Milton,"—I use the language of a contemporary author—"*one* Milton wrote a poem about the fall of man, which contained *some very good lines*." This poem was published in Milton's lifetime, acknowledged by

him as the author, and not claimed by any other; but it was little known for about half a century; that is, until the days of the Spectator, when Addison brought it into notice by an exposition of its excellences. Almost every critic since that time has noticed it, and made extracts from it; and no one has ever called in question the genuineness of Paradise Lost, as a writing of Milton. There is, therefore, a moral certainty, as great as the nature of the thing admits of; and the fact has become so identified with English literature, that, supposing our language to exist, living or dead, a thousand years hence, it will be believed then, with as much certainty as it is now, that Paradise Lost was written by *one* John Milton. No man doubts that the poems ascribed to Virgil are genuine; because the fact is identified with the literature of the Augustan age; so, while there are in the world any traces of English literature, no man can reasonably doubt the genuineness of the poem of Milton. Upon the same principle, but with stronger evidence, the apostolic writings are proved to be genuine; for they were delivered to both individuals and churches, while the writers were alive. By these individuals and churches they were preserved, and became incorporated with the literature of the age immediately following, which it was impossible for forgeries to be; and thus the unanimous testimony of the writers of that age assures

us of the genuineness of the apostolic writings.

This is called the tradition of written testimony; and it furnishes abundant evidence of the fact for which it is adduced; such evidence as no man can resist, without denying the principles by which he would judge of evidence with regard to anything else. We receive the Holy Scriptures, therefore, as demonstrated to be the writings of the inspired men whose names they bear, altogether independently of the authority of the church of Rome and her traditions, because they were identified with the literature of the period before the church of Rome was distinguished above other churches. It is impossible that writers of the next century can furnish stronger evidence of the genuineness of Paradise Lost, than that which is already on record; so it was impossible that the church of Rome, after the fourth century, when she began to assume authority over other churches, could add to the evidence in favour of the apostolic writings which had been established beyond all dispute in the second and third centuries.

Such is the use which Protestants make of tradition; and that it is very different from that of the Papist must be evident to every child who can read the statement. I shall, however, for the sake of illustration, give an example that resembles their tradition, and

that also by referring to a great poet. My readers have all, no doubt, heard of Ossian, the son of Fingal. Tradition says, that this Fingal was a great king in Scotland or Ireland, it is not certain which, somewhere between a thousand and two thousand years ago; and that his son Ossian composed many songs in Gaelic, which were handed down by word of mouth, from age to age, till about fifty years ago, when *one* Macpherson took them down in writing, from the lips of some old men and women, and translated them into English. This was genuine oral tradition, down to the date of the said writing and translation. But I suppose no man, who understands the nature of moral evidence, considers it proved, by the publication of these poems, that they were all, or any of them, written by a prince whose name they bear. Had they been written by Ossian, and received as his, without contradiction by contemporary writers, or by writers of the immediately succeeding age, the genuineness of them would have been established beyond dispute; but as the case stands, no man can entertain a rational conviction that what we have as the poems of Ossian, were, *bonâ fide*, composed by a great prince of that name. Much less will he consider them as containing an authentic record of historical facts. There may be many facts in them, but from the necessary uncertainty of oral

tradition, and the want of corroborating testimony, no man can possibly tell what is fact, and what is fable; because, from failure of memory on the one hand, and national vanity on the other, much must be omitted, and many things exaggerated; not to speak of what poetry may have invented.

There may have been such a king as Fingal. There may have been such a prince as Ossian; and he may have been a great poet. Nay, I will go further, and admit, that there is a strong probability of these things; for I can no more believe that Macpherson fabricated these poems than that Ossian composed them all. I will even admit, that it is probable that fragments of songs composed by *one* Ossian may have been preserved for hundreds of years by oral tradition, and that we have some of these in English in Macpherson's book. Many passages there are of great beauty, pathos, and sublimity, worthy of the son of the "mighty chief of Morven, the first of a thousand kings." But bare probability is the utmost that the evidence can produce in the mind of a serious inquirer after historical truth. And this is all that Popish oral tradition can effect; and that only with regard to things not contrary to Scripture; so that no wise man will build any article of faith or ordinance of worship upon such an uncertain foundation.*

* It is generally considered that though Macpherson may

We do not receive the apostolic writings upon authority so vague, as Dr. Milner would insinuate; for besides their *being written* at first, which puts them out of the rank of oral traditions, the substance of them was speedily incorporated with other writings, which remain to this day as witnesses of the fact, insomuch that a modern author is said to have boasted, that though the New Testament were lost, he could almost make it up from the works of the Greek and Latin fathers. I will allow this to be a figure of speech bordering on the hyperbole; but it is founded upon the fact, that the works of the fathers of the first four centuries, whose genuineness nobody denies, are full of quotations from the very Bible which we possess. I am not referring to these fathers as authorities for any doctrine, but merely as competent witnesses of the fact, that the Scriptures were received by all Christians before the church of Rome was distinguished above other churches; and therefore we do not receive them on the authority of either her or her traditions.

That faith in the word of God which constitutes a man a Christian, is founded on higher authority than even the tradition of written testimony, which produces only a

have collected some fragments of ancient songs, yet he enlarged, altered, and added to them, which renders the analogy to Popish tradition still more complete.—Ed.

rational conviction, not a Divine faith. But this, I hope, will appear a sufficient answer to Dr. Milner's assertion, that we are obliged to admit of tradition, (in his sense of the word, of course,) in order to admit of Scripture itself. For an illustration of the other topic, how we know the Bible to be the word of God independently of human testimony, I refer the reader to No. cxxxiv. in vol. iii.*

I conclude this branch of the subject with remarking, that Popish authors claim great merit, on the part of their church, for having kept the Bible so carefully for us, for so many ages, and for giving it to the world at last; but these writers forget that the word of God was not given to the churches to be *kept up*, but to be given away and published; and it appears to me, that in using this plea of merit, the church of Rome appears in as awkward a predicament as the "wicked and slothful servant" did, who boasted that he had hid his Lord's talent in a napkin.

I come now to consider the things which Dr. Milner says Protestants have received from tradition. "The first precept in the Bible," says he, "is that of sanctifying the seventh day." He proves this at length by the first institution of the sabbath, and by the fourth commandment in the decalogue, a thing which no Protestant requires to be proved. Then he proceeds: "On the other

* See Addenda B.

hand, Christ declares that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, Matt. v. 17. He himself observed the sabbath; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, Luke iv. 16. His disciples likewise observed it after his death; they rested the sabbath day, according to the commandment, Luke xxiii. 56. Yet, with all this weight of Scripture authority for keeping the sabbath or seventh day holy, Protestants of all denominations make it a profane day, and transfer the obligation of it to the first day of the week, or Sunday. Now, what authority have they for this? None whatever, except the *unwritten word* or tradition of the Catholic church, which declares that the apostles made the change in honour of Christ's resurrection and the descent of the Holy Ghost on that day of the week." *Letter* xi. p. 96.

Dr. Milner must have been thinking of the manner in which Papists keep their *holy* days, when he spoke about Protestants making the seventh day, or Saturday, a *profane** day. It is well known that the holy days of the church of Rome are the most wicked and profane of all the year, at least after mass, which is always celebrated early; but consistent Protestants, I mean real Christians, have no pro-

* I am aware that this word is used in the sense of *secular*, or *not sacred*, as we say, *profane* history; but I must protest against such a word coming into use in reference to any part of Christian practice.

fane days, but consider themselves bound to live to the glory of God as much on one day as another; and while following their lawful business on ordinary days, they are as really obeying the commandment, as when they meet for religious worship on the sabbath.

But while thus asserting the duty of Christians to serve God every day, I am far from denying the special obligation of the sabbath. There was Divine wisdom and goodness in the appointment of a day to recur at short intervals, when we should have the privilege of withdrawing from secular affairs, and be allowed, without the interruption of these, to apply our minds to the contemplation of heavenly things, to observe Divine ordinances, and enjoy the benefit of Christian fellowship. The obligation of sanctifying such a day, or devoting it to the service of God, with a special reference to spiritual things, is not only admitted but maintained by serious Christians of every denomination.

The proportion of time to be so consecrated, is fixed by Divine authority to be one day in seven. The seventh day was originally appointed for the reason assigned at the institution of the sabbath, and repeated in the fourth commandment. Because on that day God rested from all his works, it was a significant memorial of his rest, as well as a suitable portion of time for his creatures to rest from their labour; for it had respect not only

to the spiritual exercises of rational and immortal beings, but also to the recruiting of the physical strength of man and the inferior creatures, which would soon be exhausted by hard labour, without the stated and frequent recurrence of a day of repose. But, except as a memorial of the rest after the creation of the world, there is no stress laid upon one particular day of the seven more than another. The commandment does not say, "Remember the *seventh* day;" but "Remember the *sabbath* day to keep it holy;" that is, remember the *day of rest*, as the word signifies; then the seventh day is mentioned from its connexion with the first creation as the proper day to be observed by the church under that dispensation; and so it was observed by the Jews in all their generations, and by Christ's disciples, after his crucifixion, but *before his resurrection;* for after that event we have no notice of their observing the seventh day, or Jewish sabbath. Thereafter, the first day of the week was that on which the disciples came together for prayer. Christ in person consecrated this day, by meeting with his disciples once and again before his ascension. The day of pentecost was the first day of the week, as we learn from the appointment of that festival, which was ordained to be the day after the Sabbath, *Lev.* xxiii. 16. On this day the disciples were met, *before* the Holy Ghost came upon them,

and therefore that day was not ordained in honour of his descent. So far as the history of the apostles goes, they continued to observe the first day of the week; and Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, mentions that as the day of their stated meeting, 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

It is true there is no positive precept which enjoins the keeping of the first day instead of the seventh; but apostolic example is as good as precept. We are sure that what the apostles did, and instructed the churches to do, must have been agreeable to the will of God; for they acted, as well as spoke and wrote, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. These considerations, I hope, will be found sufficient to expose the impudence of the assertion, that we have nothing but the authority of tradition for observing the first day of the week as the Christian sabbath.

Dr. Milner then mentions some circumstances relating to the observance of the sabbath, in which we do not exactly follow the rule prescribed to the Jews, such as keeping it from evening to evening. "Again," says he, "it is declared in Scripture to be unlawful to dress victuals on that day, Exod. xvi. 23, or even to make a fire," Exod. xxxv. 3. And then he gives us to understand that we learn by the traditions of the church that these circumstances were only of temporary obligation. With regard to the first, that of keeping the

sabbath from evening to evening, this was merely prescribing an entire day, according to the mode of calculating other days, and therefore it is observed by Christians when they keep a whole day, according to the same rule.

Dr. Milner's other remark seems intended to inform us that there is less strictness required in the observance of the Christian, than there was of the Jewish sabbath; and this we learn by the tradition of the church; and I grant there is a very prevalent tradition to that effect, which influences the opinion and even the practice of many Protestants. But I am not aware of any foundation for this in Scripture, and therefore I must object to it as a human tradition, calculated to make void the law of God. I know, indeed, that by the law of Moses the sabbath-breaker was put to death; but that does not infer that more strictness of observance was required, for we know that conjugal infidelity was also punished with death, which certainly does not infer that Christians may be less strict in that respect than Jews were. The law of Moses ordained also that idolaters should be put to death. Happily for Papists, this is not obligatory upon Christians, and yet there is no less strictness required in keeping ourselves from idols. The truth is, there was a system of jurisprudence, or municipal law, bound up with the ordinances of worship, and

the law of the ten commandments; for in Israel the nation and the church were identical. The distinction of church and state was unknown. It was not a civil establishment of religion, but a Divine establishment of polity, the head of which, both in spirituals and temporals, was Jehovah, the God of Israel. It follows, as a thing of course, that with the consummation of that dispensation both the ritual and municipal branches of the law terminated; and left for us under the New Testament nothing of the nature of precept but the original law of the ten commandments, which Christ exemplified and magnified by his obedience and suffering, and delivered as the rule of conduct to all the subjects of his kingdom; not in any respect mitigated, or requiring less strictness than before, but requiring the entire devotion of the heart and life to the service and glory of God; not as the price of any spiritual benefit, but as an expression of love and gratitude for spiritual blessings already received by the gospel.

Now, when Christ taught his disciples that this law was much more strict than they were aware of, and that it extended to the very thoughts of the heart, is it to be supposed that he made a special exception in prejudice of the fourth commandment, "Thou shalt remember the sabbath day to keep it holy?" Certainly not; for the sanctification of that day is enjoined in the strictest manner, in the

summary which Christ gave of the first table of the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength," Mark xii. 30. Christ did, indeed, reprove the Pharisees for their affected hypocritical strictness about the sabbath. This was not because he was less strict than they, but because he saw that their professions were insincere and inconsistent. He told them that it was lawful to do good on the sabbath day, though it should require great labour, such as the lifting an ox out of a pit; that the law had always admitted of th s and other acts of humanity and mercy, and that the Jews had been in the habit of doing so without blame, when occasion required.

Those precepts about the sabbath, therefore, such as the length of a journey, and other matters, not expressed in the commandment, are not binding upon us; but the commandment itself I hold to be binding in all its extent and original strictness.

SECTION XI.

In my last section, I replied to Dr. Milner's assertion, that we had nothing but the authority of tradition for observing the sabbath on the first, instead of the seventh day of the week; and also to what he says about the obligation of observing it, being less strict under the New Testament dispensation

than it was under that of Moses. I showed, that for the observance of the first day we had the example of the apostles, and of the churches which they planted, which is of equal authority with any precept; and as for the sanctifying of the sabbath, I endeavoured to show, that the fourth commandment remains in full force, and in all its original strictness.

In comparing the two dispensations, we find, indeed, that in this as in other respects, the law of Moses lays more stress upon things external and visible, than the New Testament does, which regards more the spirit of the thing than its outward circumstances. But this, so far from being a reason why we should pay less respect to the sabbath, is rather an argument for greater strictness, seeing that by the greater spirituality of the new dispensation, we are brought into more intimate contact with spiritual and heavenly things. This strictness does not consist in measuring how far we may lawfully travel; or in forbearing to kindle a fire, which in some climates is as much a work of necessity as putting on one's clothes; but it consists in the abstraction of both body and mind from our ordinary worldly employments; devotion of heart to the service of God; personal attendance on the ordinances of his worship; and as much labour as we are capable of in doing good to fellow

creatures, especially by communicating the knowledge of Christian doctrine to our families, to our neighbours, and all to whom we have access.

Serious Christians regard the service of the sabbath not as a burden but as a privilege; and the more strictly they observe it in the spirit of it, the greater blessing they find it. This is a matter of experience and individual consciousness which will not be comprehended by those who require arguments to convince them that they may not lawfully take liberties with that holy day, or that think they need not keep it so holy as the Jews did. We are able to judge of the state of religion in any society from their observance of the sabbath. If they are spiritually minded, they will punctually and cheerfully attend to the exercises proper for the day; but if they are carnal, they will begin to say, "What a weariness is it!" and, by and by, they will make it, in more senses than one, what Dr. Milner calls a profane day. This has been eminently the case in the church of Rome for hundreds of years. Popish countries on the continent, and the more Popish parts of Ireland, are notorious for sabbath profanation; and the contagion of their example has infected Protestants who live among them, or in neighbouring states; so that what was mercifully intended for the benefit of man and beast, is turned to the

injury of both; and what was appointed for the worship of God, has been turned to the service of the devil. Papists have no idea of sanctifying the sabbath further than attending mass in the morning, and perhaps hearing a short discourse which they call Christian doctrine. After that, in countries where they are not under legal restraint, the day is spent in gaming, drinking, and fighting; so that, instead of repairing the exhaustion of the week's labour, they are more exhausted by the revelry of that day than by all the labour of the week.

It is worthy of remark here, that when our kings of the Stuart line had a hankering after Popery, and wished to put down Puritanism, they adopted the expedient of desecrating the sabbath. Thus James I. of England, affected to think it hard that his good subjects, after they had been at church, should sit the remainder of the Sunday moping at their Bibles, or teaching their children their catechism. He, therefore, out of his royal bounty, and great regard for their welfare, issued a proclamation, giving them liberty to spend the day, after public worship, in the noble exercises of leaping, dancing, wrestling, archery, and such like; and he commanded the ministers of all parish churches to read this proclamation, after sermon on the Sundays; which was such a burlesque of sacred things, that we should

scarcely credit the fact, were not the proclamation itself extant, and were there not an ample record of the sufferings of many godly ministers who refused to read to their congregations, on the Lord's day, this Book of Sports, as it was called: which was revived and reinforced by Charles I., who had the same object in view; and who, though not a Papist himself, so far as appeared, was under the influence of a Popish queen and a host of Jesuit priests, who did every thing in their power to banish true religion from the kingdom; and who knew well that they could not do this till they had banished the sabbath.

I have indulged myself in a digression, which I hope will not be considered an idle one, seeing it arose out of my exposure of Dr. Milner's sophistry, and the subject is of great importance.

I proceed now in my explanation of those things which Dr. Milner says Protestants have received from tradition. He quotes the law with regard to eating blood, which he says was confirmed by the apostles; and by them "imposed upon the Gentiles who were converted to the faith," Acts xv. 20. "Nevertheless," says he, "where is the religious Protestant who scruples to eat gravy with his meat, or puddings made of blood? At the same time, if it be asked, upon what authority do you act in direct contradiction

to the express words of both the Old and New Testament? he can find no other answer than that he has learned from the tradition of the church that the prohibition was only temporary," p. 97

I do not know any Protestant who would give such an answer to such a question; but I do know many religious Protestants who scruple to eat blood, and who consider the commandment to abstain from things strangled and from blood, as of permanent obligation. I admit there are others who think differently; but they do not rest their opinion upon any tradition of the church of Rome. In the primitive churches, there were many questions agitated about meats; that is, about what might, and what might not be eaten. The apostle Paul told them, that the kingdom of heaven did not consist in these things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17; and that a man might lawfully eat of any thing that he bought in the market, or what was set before him on the table of an unbelieving neighbour, unless he was informed that it was connected with the worship of some idol; in which case he was to have nothing to do with it, lest he should give countenance to idol worship, 1 Cor. x. 25—27. This was the general rule laid down for the conduct of Christians; and it seems to admit of as

much latitude as any man could wish. The habits of Jews and Gentiles, however, had been so different with regard to these things, that when they became united in Christian congregations, it was necessary, for the sake of peace and edification, that they should concede something to each other. The Jews were required to concede to the Gentiles the article of circumcision, and not to insist upon subjecting them to that rite, while they were allowed to practise it among themselves, if they pleased; and the Gentiles were required to concede to the Jews abstinence from things strangled, and from blood, and from fornication, all which were connected with idol worship; and these concessions on both sides were absolutely necessary for the peace and edification of the churches. The last article being a precept of the moral law, there can be no question about the perpetual obligation of it; though, from previous habits, connected with their former religion, the Gentiles were apt to think fornication scarcely, if at all, a crime; but the rest, which relates merely to an article of food, or to the manner of killing and preparing food for the table, is not so clearly a standing law of the kingdom of heaven, in which such liberty as the following is allowed:—"One believeth that he may eat *all things:* another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise

him that eateth not; and let not him who eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him," Rom. xiv. 2, 3.

On the general subject of meats and days, the rule which the same apostle prescribes is, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind;" which shows that the things are indifferent: and not matters of moral obligation or positive institution; for with regard to these no such latitude is ever allowed in the word of God. Paul himself could eat flesh without scruple; and yet he says:— "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend," 1 Cor. viii. 13. This was in the true spirit of Christian charity and liberality. Upon this principle, I suppose it was, that the Gentile converts were required to forbear what must have been insufferably offensive to their Jewish brethren. And yet I am not so certain that this was the *sole* reason, or that there is no speciality in the case, as to say, those persons err, who consider the precept as binding upon them. There is no sin in forbearing to eat blood; and he who has the least doubt about the lawfulness of it does wisely to forbear. On either side of the question, we derive no more light from Dr. Milner's tradition than from the man in the moon.

I am not sufficiently acquainted with the arts of killing and cooking to know what

proportion of blood may be incorporated with the gravy of a beef-steak; and I cannot allow myself to think that this is, or ever was, a religious question, or a matter that should affect a man's conscience. The command, in all its strictness, certainly applied to the family of Noah, and to the children of Israel; but it does not necessarily imply more than that the blood be drained from the veins of the animal in the ordinary manner, and not suffered to incorporate with the flesh, as in the case of an animal dying of strangulation, or dying a natural death: and while I admit that the Jews are more particular in extracting the blood than we are, if that be blood which we have in the gravy of beef, I believe it impossible to extract it entirely; and, therefore, if this was implied in the precept, it must have been a prohibition of flesh altogether, which we are sure it was not; for the commandment to abstain from the blood was originally given with the permission to eat flesh.

Dr. Milner, and my other Popish readers, will affect to triumph at the uncertainty which I have admitted to exist, with regard to the obligation of what appears to be an apostolic injunction. They will say, Where is the boasted perfection of your rule—the Bible alone? and they will tell us how happy they are, seeing they have the living voice of the church, which assures them that the pro-

hibition of blood-eating was only temporary. Now, though this living voice may produce silent submission in those who respect such authority, it does not produce conviction in the mind of any man; and therefore it is of no use. Allowing the church, that is, the priests, to be successors of the apostles, they cannot, even on their own principles, claim more authority and power in their living voice than the apostles had in theirs. Now, it is a fact, that the living voice of the apostles, with all the miraculous powers which they possessed, did not produce unanimity on such points as these; and they did not desire such unanimity without conviction. If submission to *mere* authority was ever imperative upon any man, it must have been on those to whom the apostles spoke. Yet we do not hear them assuming this tone of authority; or saying, You must all be of one mind about what may, and what may not be eaten. They left every one to act according to his own convictions, only requiring that he would allow his brother the same liberty: "for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse," 1 Cor. viii. 8. The truth is, the kingdom of heaven does not consist in these things; and to be all of one mind about them is not more necessary than to be all of one stature.

Thus, by taking the written word alone as our rule, we are at least as much agreed in

sentiment as those were who heard the living voice of the apostles, with all the advantage of repetition and oral explanation. The church of Rome cannot do more by her living voice; and therefore her children have no advantage over those who consult the Scriptures. In these we read what the apostles wrote; and it is a matter of fact, that the reading of their words produces as much unanimity now, as the literal hearing of it did when they were upon earth. All that the church of Rome effects by her authoritative dogmatizing is submission without conviction, which is the union of slaves bound together by one chain: but the written word of God, like the preaching of the apostles, produces the union of individuals personally convinced of the truth of the gospel, and so united in affection, that they can suffer every one to follow his own convictions about matters in which the kingdom of heaven does not consist. This is the union of free and rational beings; and I suppose it is as much as Christians will ever attain in this world.

I must try to get over this ground a little faster. "I will confine myself," says Dr. Milner, "to one more instance of Protestants abandoning their own rule, that of Scripture alone, to follow ours, of Scripture explained by tradition. It an intelligent pagan, who had carefully perused the New Testament, were asked, Which of the ordinances men-

tioned in it is most explicitly and strictly enjoined? I make no doubt but he would answer, that it is *the washing of feet.*" After referring to John xiii., with remarks, he proceeds: "I now ask, on what pretence can those who profess to make Scripture alone the rule of their religion, totally disregard this institution and precept? Had this ceremony been observed in the church, when Luther and the other first Protestants began to dogmatize, there is no doubt but they would have retained it: but having learned from her that it was only figurative, they acquiesced in this decision, contrary to what appears to be the plain sense of Scripture," pp. 97, 98.

It is not of much importance to inquire what Luther would have done in the case supposed. It is well known that he retained a good deal of the nonsense which he learned in the church of Rome; and it would have been very surprising if he had not, considering the firm hold that established and long venerated custom had upon his mind. But does Dr. Milner not know, that this ordinance of washing feet was then, and is still, observed in the church of Rome? He certainly does know, for all the world knows the fact, that on certain solemn occasions, the pope, to show his great humility, washes the feet of twelve poor men, when they are as clean as his own fingers; but which he

pretends to wash, in imitation of what Christ did to his disciples. I suppose Dr. Milner, living in England, is ashamed to acknowledge the fact, which presents his holy father in such a ludicrous light, and therefore he writes as if there were no such thing.

I admit that what Christ did on that occasion had a figurative meaning; that when he said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," he meant something more important than the mere application of water to the feet of the disciple; but I do not admit what Dr. Milner says the church teaches, "that it was *only* figurative." I do not say that Christ appointed the washing of feet as an ordinance, as Dr. Milner insinuates; but I think he did this as an example to his disciples; and that as an example it is binding upon us, and upon all Christians to the end of the world, not merely as to the specific act of washing the feet, but as to that which such an action signified; namely, hospitality and kindness to our brethren, especially to those who are going from place to place in the service of Christ, and the ministry of the gospel. In reference to this washing of feet, Christ says, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you;" that is, an example for your imitation. When instituting an ordinance, he does not say, Imitate my example, or, Do *as* I have done; but "THIS DO in remembrance of me," in which

the actions of eating bread and drinking wine are specifically appointed; and no others will be acknowledged as obedience to the ordinance. But an example admits of latitude, and may be imitated in the spirit of it by a great variety of actions.

In eastern countries, in ancient times, persons did not travel, as many do now, in stage-coaches and steam-boats, but usually on foot, over scorching sands; and they had not, as our pedestrians have, the benefit of stockings and close shoes, but wore sandals, which covered only the soles of their feet, and were tied with thongs about the ankles. A person thus equipped, coming from a journey, felt that the first thing necessary for his comfort was the washing of his feet; and the performance of this service, or even the furnishing of water for the purpose, being the first kind action which one man was called upon to perform to another who was a stranger, came of course to designate all the duties of hospitality and brotherly kindness. Thus we find the apostle Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, draws the character of one who was worthy of consideration, as having *washed the saints' feet*, that is, having been hospitable, which implies every office of kind and brotherly affection; and in this sense Christ's example of washing the feet of his disciples is as binding now as ever it was.

After attempting to prove the certainty of

tradition, from the impossibility of any change taking place in the doctrine and practice of the church without opposition, Dr. Milner sums up his argument in the following words: "In a word, there is but one way of accounting for the alleged alteration in the doctrines of the church; that mentioned by the learned Dr. Bailey; which is, to suppose that, on some one night, all the Christians of the world went to sleep sound Protestants, and awoke the next morning rank Papists," p. 112.

Dr. Milner is welcome to claim for the church of Rome all the Christians *of* the world, meaning, I suppose, *worldly Christians;* and I hope he will allow me to claim for the Protestant churches all who are *not of* the world, but chosen out of it, as Christ says his disciples were. But passing this, I beg to remind the reader that a similar argument was used by my correspondent, W. D., and fully answered in pages 159 to 162 in my second volume; in which I showed that the church of Rome had most certainly deviated far from the right line of truth, and that it was not necessary to trace and mark every step of such deviation.* Without repeating what was then said, I now observe, that Dr. Milner has furnished me with an argument, that completely overthrows his own. He tells us, page 101, on the authority of a divine

* See Addenda C.

of the church of England, what is pretty well known to be the fact, that the church of Geneva has departed from the doctrine which Calvin taught; and adopted principles very different from those so zealously maintained by their fathers. How is this possible? When did the change take place? There is only one way of accounting for it; which is, that, on some one night, the Genevese Christians went to bed sound Calvinists, and awoke the next morning rank Socinians! Dr. Milner himself must allow that this supposition is as good as Dr. Bailey's; and yet it is of no weight when opposed to the notorious fact, that a great change has taken place in the church of Geneva. And this has been tacitly brought about in less than three hundred years of increasing light and knowledge, when every man was able to detect any material deviation from first principles; how much easier, then, must it have been for a few artful men in the church of Rome, during more than a thousand years of gross darkness, to effect any change they pleased!

Dr. Milner insinuates further, that a change like that in Geneva has taken place among Protestants in general:—"Is it demonstrably evident," says he, "from *mere Scripture*, that Christ is God, and to be adored as such? Most modern Protestants of eminence answer, No; and, in defence of their

assertion, quote the following, among other texts; 'My Father is greater than I.'" If what Dr. Milner here asserts were true, I would show how it operated against his argument; but it is false, that most modern Protestants of eminence do as he says; and therefore I only remark upon it, that he, like other Popish writers, seems very willing to serve the cause of Socinianism, when he has an opportunity of throwing in a hint in its favour.

SECTION XII.

I HAVE now discussed the principal points contained in what Dr. Milner calls the "true rule of faith;" and I hope I have proved, to the satisfaction of every intelligent reader, that Popish tradition is of no value, and that the Bible alone is sufficient for the instruction of men in all which is necessary to be known for their salvation, and in all which they ought to practise for the glory of God and the benefit of fellow creatures.

In his twelfth Letter, which is entitled "Objections answered," Dr. Milner takes leave of this subject, and concludes the first part of his work. Here I think it worth while to give a pretty large quotation of his very words, in order to show what spirit he is of, and what high ground he assumes, as a successor of the apostles, and as a priest of

the *holy* church, which has, it seems, an exclusive patent for possessing and understanding the Scriptures:—

"Against the Catholic rule it is objected," says he, "that Christ referred the Jews to the Scriptures: 'Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me,' John v. 39. Again, the Jews of Berea are commended by the sacred penman, in that they 'searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so,' Acts xvii. 11.

"Before I enter on the discussion of any part of Scripture, with you or your friends, I am bound, dear sir, in conformity with my rule of faith, as explained by the fathers, and particularly by Tertullian, to protest against your and their right to argue from Scripture, and, of course, must deny that there is any necessity for my replying to any objections which you may draw from it. For I have reminded you that 'no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,' and I have proved to you that *the whole business of the Scriptures belongs to the church.* She has preserved them, she vouches for them, and she alone, by confronting the several passages with each other, and by the help of tradition, authoritatively explains them. *Hence it is impossible that the real sense of Scripture should ever be against her and her doctrine;* and hence, of course, I might quash every objection

which you can draw from any passage in it by this short reply: *The church understands the passage differently from you, therefore you must mistake its meaning,*" p. 118. This is telling us in plain language what the claims of the church of Rome are, and what she is ready to enforce whenever she shall have acquired power. We have no right to dispute with her; she needs not descend to argue with us; she is the sole judge of the meaning of every text in the Bible, not one of which can have a meaning different from what she is pleased to impose; for "it is impossible that the real sense of Scripture should ever be against her and her doctrine!" This is the short and summary argument by which Dr. Milner says he "*might* quash every objection." Then, it may be asked, what is the use of reasoning at all about the matter? Why not silence every objector by the strong arm of power, as formerly, that is, by the stake and the gibbet? for if Papists are convinced that they cannot possibly be wrong, they would be great fools to put their cause to the hazard of an argument.

Such a fool, however, Dr. Milner must be; seeing he has written five hundred large octavo pages to prove what he says he can prove in little more than five words: "The church understands" so and so, and that is enough; "it is impossible that the real sense of Scripture should ever be against her and her doctrine."

But to show that he is generous in his folly he thus continues: "Nevertheless, as charity beareth all things, and never faileth, I will, for the better satisfying of you and your friends, *quit my vantage ground* for the present, and answer distinctly to every text not yet answered by me, which any of your gentlemen, or which Dr. Porteus himself, has brought against the Catholic method of religion," p. 119.

As a specimen of the manner in which Dr. Milner answers *to* those texts of Scripture which are usually adduced against his rule, take the following:—

"By way of answering your first objection, let me ask you whether Christ, by telling the Jews to search the Scriptures, intimated that they were not to believe his *unwritten* word, which he was then preaching, nor to hear his apostles and their successors, with whom he promised to remain for ever? I ask, secondly, on what particular question Christ referred to the Scripture, namely, the Old Scripture? for no part of the New was then written. Was it on any question that has been, or might be, agitated among Christians? No, certainly; the sole question between him and the infidel Jews, was, whether he was or was not the Messiah? In proof that he was the Messiah, he adduced the ordinary motives of credibility, as they have been detailed by your late worthy rector, Mr. Carey, the miracles

he wrought, and the prophecies of the Old Testament that were fulfilled in him, as likewise the testimony of St. John the Baptist. The same is to be said of the commendations bestowed by St. Luke on the Bereans; they searched the ancient prophecies to verify that the Messiah was to be born at such a time and in such a place, and that his life and his death were to be marked by such and such circumstances. We still refer Jews and other infidels to the same proofs of Christianity, without saying any thing yet to them about our rule or judge of controversies," pp. 119, 120.

I request the reader to look over the last paragraph again. It is the whole of Dr. Milner's answer to what is alleged by Protestants against the church of Rome, from the words "Search the Scriptures," and from the divinely inspired commendation of the Bereans for searching the Scriptures daily. And what is the amount of this answer? Just nothing at all. No Protestant ever imagined that what Christ said to the Jews on that occasion, intimated that they were not to believe his word, or that of his apostles; and the starting of this question is nothing but a barefaced evasion of the argument which he felt himself unable to answer.

On this subject, I will give Dr. Milner an advantage of which he did not know how to avail himself; for I believe he does not un-

derstand Greek, that being a branch of learning to which Popish priests have a great aversion, and they are jealous of it, lest it should disparage their infallible Latin Vulgate.* Every Greek scholar knows that what stands in our translation as a command, "Search the Scriptures," (ερευνατε τας γραφας,) may, with equal propriety, be read in the indicative, thus,—"Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me; and *yet* ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." Had Dr. Milner known that this is a true and consistent translation of the words, he would no doubt have availed himself of it, seeing it is not a command to search the Scriptures, but merely the admission of a fact that the Jews had a practice of doing so; and we know they had many bad practices. I expect the next generation of Popish authors will improve this hint; and they will probably put their argument in this form: Christ did not command the people to search the Scriptures, but *complained* of their doing so, as a gross abuse of sacred things, which did not belong to them but to the priests!

In Christ's words to the Jews there is the statement of a fact—they searched the Scrip-

* From Mr. Grier's Reply, p. 61, I learn that Dr. Milner has somewhere avowed his imperfect acquaintance with Greek.

tures; and the reason of their doing so was, that in them they thought they had eternal life. This was a cogent reason for their doing what they did, and on this account I prefer reading the words in the indicative; for the mere thinking a certain line of conduct right is not of itself a sufficient reason for commanding persons to follow it.* But Protestants lose nothing by conceding to the Papists this advantage, which they are too illiterate to find out for themselves; for though the words are not a command to search the Scriptures, they prove that the people had a right to do so, which is enough for my present purpose.

Dr. Milner, supposing the words to be in the imperative,† and not knowing how to relieve the Jews from the obligation of searching the Scriptures, admits the propriety of *their* doing so, because the question was merely a question among Jews, or between Christ and the Jews; and for the decision of this he admits the propriety of searching the Jewish Scriptures. Then, surely, for the decision of questions that rise among Christians, it is proper to have recourse to the Christian Scriptures, or the New Testament.

* See Dr. Campbell on the passage.

† Since writing the above, I have looked into the Douay Bible, and I find the indicative reading of the passage mentioned in a note, though the imperative is retained in the text. Still, it is probable few Papists know this, as they are not very familiar even with their own version.

This, however, Dr. Milner will not admit; for they have the living voice of the church, which they are commanded to hear. Well, the Jews had the living voice of prophets during most of their existence as a nation; they had just had the living voice of John the Baptist, and now they had the living voice of Christ himself, which they were commanded by a voice from heaven to hear; and yet they exercised their right to search the Scriptures. Suppose, then, for the sake of argument, that the church had a living voice of equal authority, it would not deprive Christians of the right which Christ acknowledged and confirmed, by repeatedly in his discourses referring the people to the Scriptures; and which was again confirmed by the apostolic commendation of the Bereans for searching them. But the truth is, the church has no living voice that can speak agreeably to Scripture, and therefore it is that she wishes to silence the oracles of God, that her own authority may remain uncontrolled.

Dr. Milner's answer *to* other texts is equally unsatisfactory, and I shall not put the reader's patience to the test of going over them all.

Among Dr. Milner's "Objections answered" we read as follows:—"Against the infallibility of the church in deciding questions of faith, I am referred to various other arguments made use of by Dr. Porteus, and in the

first place to the following:—'Romanists themselves own that men must use their eyes to find this guide; why, then, must they put them out to follow him?' I answer by the following comparisons: Every prudent man makes use of his reason to find out an able physician to take care of his health, and an able lawyer to secure his property; but, having found these to his full satisfaction, does he dispute with the former about the quality of medicines, or with the latter about forms of law? Thus the Catholic makes use of his reason to observe which, among the rival communions, is the church that Christ established and promised to remain with; having ascertained that, by the plain acknowledged marks which the church bears, he trusts his soul to her unerring judgment, in preference to his own fluctuating opinion," p. 125.

Here it is virtually admitted by Dr. Milner, that when men have found this guide which he speaks of, they must put out their eyes, and follow him blindfold; for he does not disavow the principle which the objection implies, but explains and defends it: and this explanation suggests some very humbling and painful reflections. It is both painful and humbling to reflect, that, in this age of knowledge and general improvement, there should exist in England a man capable of seriously maintaining such absurd and

slavish principles; and that this man is not a coal-heaver, a scavenger, or doer of night-work; but a right reverend bishop, a D.D. and F.S.A., and a vicar apostolic, having spiritual oversight of all the Papists in the midland district of England. Titled, however, and distinguished as he is among the silly sheep of his own pasture, I am persuaded there is not a shepherd to be found upon the mountains of Scotland, who would not be ashamed to say in jest what Dr. Milner advances as a solemn and conclusive argument.

This argument, or rather comparison, proceeds upon the assumption that the knowledge of religion is no more a matter of personal interest than a knowledge of law and physic; and that it is just as proper to trust a priest with the care of souls, as a physician with the health of our bodies, or a lawyer with the security of our property. He affects not to know, or, perhaps rather, he really does not know, that proficiency in physic and law is attainable by only a few, and that at the expense of much labour, time, and money; while the gospel of the grace of God, which brings salvation to the guilty and the perishing, is brought down to the level of the meanest capacity, and presented to all men for acceptance, without money and without price; and for the purpose of their immediate personal enjoyment of its benefits, with-

out the labour and expense of long preparatory study.

In civil society, it is right to encourage and respect those who devote their lives to the study and practice of any useful art or science. Providence has so ordered matters, that what is called the division of labour obtains in civilized nations, without any studied effort to produce it. He who studies physic becomes a skilful physician; he who studies the statutes, and the fundamental principles of jurisprudence, becomes an expert expounder of the law; and those who study the necessary manual arts become expert tailors and shoemakers. One who has not studied any of these arts or professions, may, very properly and rationally, trust one with the clothing of his feet; another with the covering of his back; one with the drawing of a tooth; and another with the drawing of his last will; because all these are mere matters of this world, which no man is obliged to study or practise, unless he has chosen them as his profession. But the concerns of a man's soul—the business of his personal salvation—is what he cannot devolve upon another. This is a matter which every man must understand for himself. There is neither salvation nor damnation by proxy. The word of God addresses men as individuals: "If *any man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and fol

low me; and *him* that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," are the gracious words of Christ addressed to men as individuals, and to all men without distinction. It is with God himself directly that men have to do. It is Him that we have offended by our sins; it is He who has provided the remedy, by sending the Saviour to die for us; it is He who says, "*Whosoever* believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life;" it is to Him that we must answer, each one for *himself*, for the reception which we give to this good news; and it is according to the reception which men give to the gospel, that they are thus personally and pointedly addressed: "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for *thyself:* but if thou scornest, *thou alone* shalt bear it," Prov. ix. 12.

What horrible presumption and impiety is it, therefore, in Dr. Milner to teach his poor deluded flock that they may safely trust their souls to the unerring judgment of the church; that is, to such men as himself, for we all know that by the church he means the priests! This, indeed, he confesses in the paragraph which immediately follows: "Most likely the Catholic peasant learns the doctrine of the church from his parish priest; but then he knows that the doctrine of this priest must be conformable to that of his bishop, and that otherwise he will soon be called to account for it: he knows also that

the doctrine of the bishop himself must be conformable to that of the other bishops and the pope; and that it is a fundamental maxim with them all, never to admit of any tenet but such as is believed by all the bishops, and was believed by their predecessors, up to the apostles themselves," p. 126. What a variety of things this peasant must know! more, indeed, than any man ever knew or will be able to prove while the world stands! and yet he is not called to trouble himself about the knowledge of anything; but to trust his soul to the unerring judgment of the church, in preference to his own fluctuating opinion. Suppose he were to endeavour to understand what he is here said to know about what his priest teaches; which agrees with the bishop's teaching, which agrees with that of all the bishops, and with the pope and his predecessors, up to the apostles; he would find himself lost in an inextricable labyrinth; for where would he find information upon all these points? The longest term of human life would not be sufficient for the purpose; while in one hour he might learn from the gospel all that is needful for the salvation of his soul:

> "Oh, how unlike the complex works of man,
> Heaven's easy, artless, unincumber'd plan!"

Dr. Milner *propounds* his doctrine as if there were no alternative between a man's

implicitly trusting in the church, and following "his own fluctuating opinion." But the Christian follows, or trusts in, neither the one nor the other. His trust is in the word of God, and in the teaching of his Holy Spirit, who guides into all truth—into the knowledge of all things necessary for the present comfort and eternal salvation of those who receive the Divine testimony; to whom he gives an understanding to know him who is true, and to be in him who is true; even in his Son Jesus Christ; "This is the true God and eternal life."

But it must be inquired, how the Papist, by his reason, finds out "the church that Christ established, and promised to remain with?" It is by certain "plain acknowledged marks which the church bears," as Dr. Milner tells us. Where are these marks to be found? This is rather a troublesome question; for, in order to give an answer, Papists are constrained to refer to the Bible, in which they say there are certain marks by which Christ's true church may be distinguished. This is true enough: but if a man read the Bible carefully, and take the words in their plain grammatical meaning, he will not find one mark of the church of Rome there, except under the character of an enemy and an antichrist. It is as if conscious of this that the Popish priests have such an abhorrence of Bible reading. If they believed

that their religion was founded on the word of God, they would invite every man to search the Scriptures for himself, and satisfy himself that theirs was the true religion. This is what all Protestants do; which is a *primâ facie* evidence in their favour. Whether right or wrong, this indicates an honest persuasion that the word of God is on their side. But when the church of Rome refers to the Scriptures in support of her claims, and at the same time prohibits the free and general reading of them, it shows that she does not believe her own doctrine, but is conscious that she is deceiving the people.

After all, what is the use of the church of Rome's referring to the Bible, when she tells us that she is the sole judge of what the Bible teaches? —that whatever a passage may seem to express, we must certainly mistake it, unless we understand it exactly as the church does? Since the ultimate appeal must always be to her judgment, we may as well take her word at once, without going to the Bible; and this is, in fact, *the very point* she wishes to establish; and which she has established in the minds of her dutiful children. To speak of the Bible at all, then, is no better than her other impositions. In her mouth a proof from the Bible is proving a thing by itself; for it is her mouth that decides its meaning; and this is no evidence at all. Or, when she speaks of the Bible as the

word of God, she tells us that we know this only on her authority; and then she refers us to the Bible to prove that she has such authority, which involves the absurdity of proving two unproved things by each other.

The church of Rome points out the true word of God; and the word of God points out her as the true church! which is a circuitous mode of arguing of which any child ought to be ashamed. Yet this is the main bulwark of Popery; and great divines, and learned cardinals, and holy fathers, are not ashamed to argue in this manner.

Dr. Milner was perfectly aware that this mode of reasoning would be objected to; and he anticipates the objection by telling us that all such circles are not vicious, and that mutual testimony is admissible. Thus John Baptist bore witness to Christ, and Christ bore witness to the Baptist. Yes: but neither of them was a stranger to the people. Had the Jews not known what sort of man John was, his testimony would have been of no weight in favour of Christ; and had they not known something of Christ's character, his testimony on behalf of John would have been of no value with them. But, according to the church of Rome, we know nothing of the Bible but through her; and yet she says the Bible certifies her to be the only true church, which is only her own certificate at second-hand. In a long note, Dr. Milner, by means

of similitudes, tries a further vindication of this mode of reasoning; but it will not do. I defy the whole order of Jesuits to reconcile it to common sense; and I am sure I could not reconcile the use of such an argument with common honesty.

SECTION XIII.

I HAVE now gone over the first part of Dr. Milner's work, which professes to expose the false rules, and establish the true rule of faith. He thinks he has proved beyond contradiction, that this true rule is Scripture and tradition, as propounded and explained by the Catholic church; that is, the church of Rome; and that all men ought to submit to her decision with regard to what they are to believe, and what ordinances they are to observe, under pain of being held accursed as heathens and publicans. It has been my endeavour to show that his proofs are deficient, and his assumptions inadmissible, upon any principle of Scripture or common sense; and how far I have succeeded I leave to the reader to determine.

Dr. Milner enters upon the second part of his work with the confidence and assurance that the principles laid down in the first part are demonstrated by him, and admitted by his correspondents; particularly, that they ought to hear the church; and James Brown, Esquire, in the name of himself and brethren and sisters, is introduced as inquiring

whether they may not as well hear the church of England as that of Rome. Dr. Milner has convinced them that they must give up their own private judgment; that they must not presume to think for themselves what is the import of Divine revelation; but leave all to the judgment of some church. Then he congratulates them on the "advance" which they have made "towards the clear sight of the whole truth of revelation;" and tells them that now, having taken the church of God for their guide, they have but one simple inquiry to make—*Which is this church?* which, he assures them, cannot be the church of England. So it seems the only way to come to a *clear sight* of a thing is to shut our eyes. I think I have heard that this is the way in which some apprentice boys are initiated into the mysteries of their craft. After going through certain ceremonies, they are told to shut their eyes, and they will see such and such things; which appears a strange way of acquiring knowledge, and a very foolish way of becoming wise; but, unless I had read Dr. Milner's work, I could not have believed that a grave doctor and apostolic vicar would have ventured to publish to the world, that this is the right way to obtain a clear sight of the truths of Divine revelation.

Dr. Milner however admits that we may use our own eyesight till this one question be solved—Which is the true church? After

that, we have no more use for it. "Hence," says he, "it is as clear as noon day light, that by solving this one question—Which is the true church?—you will at once solve every question of religious controversy that ever has been, or that ever can be agitated. You will not need to spend your life in studying the sacred Scriptures in their original languages, and their authentic copies, and in confronting passages with each other, from Genesis to Revelation, a task by no means calculated, as is evident, for the bulk of mankind. You will only have to hear what the church teaches upon the several articles of her faith, in order to know with certainty what God hath revealed concerning them. Neither need you hearken to contending sects, and doctors of the present or past times; you will need only to hear the church, which indeed Christ commands you to hear, under pain of being treated as a heathen or a publican, Matt. xviii. 17." Part ii. p. 3.

If the reader will turn to the passage in the Gospel by Matthew here referred to, he will find that the command to hear the church relates not to any article of faith or worship, but merely to a matter of personal offence, which one man may have given to another; and he who attends to the nature of the thing will see that the church spoken of must be one which a man can speak to as well as hear. But I need not repeat what has been so often

said about Papists misrepresenting the meaning of this passage. There is not a word in the New Testament that implies a command to "hear the church" in Dr. Milner's sense; and he is guilty of the profanity of wresting Christ's words from their connexion, and applying them to a purpose which he did not intend by them. This is, however, so common with Popish writers, that perhaps he thinks there is no evil in it; though he would be grievously offended with any man who should make so free with his own words.

After all, the decision of this one question, which is to settle all other questions, is no easy matter. It is, indeed, a greater undertaking than any method adopted by Protestants for obtaining a knowledge of the truth. We search the Scriptures; and we come to know and understand the doctrines of the gospel one by one, as they are presented to the mind; but the Popish method is, to endeavour to find out where these doctrines lie concealed in a heap, and to gulp them all at once. This requires no ordinary capacity; and it must be the effect of a mightier effort than comparing passages from Genesis to Revelation. If the bulk of mankind are incapable of this, as Dr. Milner says, then his method is not calculated for men at all, but for beings of superior powers.

Dr. Milner's rule for settling all controversies by merely finding out which is the

true church, reminds me of Mrs. ———'s* rules for making hare soup. "First," says she, "catch a hare." Now this first step happens to be the most difficult in the whole process; and to the bulk of cook-maids it is prescribing no less than an impossibility. In like manner Dr. Milner prescribes, as the first step, what is impossible to the bulk of mankind; that is, to find out such a true church as he describes, for there never was such a church in the world. I mean a visible, organized, holy, apostolical, and universal church; that is, a *holy* church embracing a world of *sinful creatures:* not sinners saved and sanctified, but sinners under the power of their evil passions; and, according to the doctrine of the church itself, so *unholy* as to die in a state that requires purgation in another world. There is a contradiction in the terms *holy* and *universal*, as applied to the church in this world; and it is only in heaven that they will be found applicable to one body.

Dr. Milner himself must have been aware of the vast difficulty of settling his first question, which is to decide all other questions; for he has written 170 large octavo pages of letter-press on this one subject; and I am sure it is a more grievous task to study and understand all these than to read and under-

* I forget the name of the good lady, but some of my readers will recollect in which of the cookery books this *rule* is laid down.

stand the Holy Scriptures. By reading a few pages of the New Testament, a man may soon come to the knowledge of the truth by which he will be saved. But supposing him to take every step of Dr. Milner's laborious process; and even supposing him to be successful in finding what he sought for, namely, the true church, he has not made one step towards the understanding of the saving truth; for he finds in this church nothing but a confused heap of dogmas, traditions, legends, rites, and ceremonies, which he is commanded to believe and observe, without any regard to his understanding of them: so that, as the fruit of all his labour, he finds himself the mere slave of an authority which he is not permitted to question.

Let us now attend to Dr. Milner's marks of the true church, which he *propounds* rather pedantically, and in great capitals, as follow: —UNITY, SANCTITY, CATHOLICITY, and APOSTOLICITY. It is not my intention to reply to the whole 170 pages which he has written upon these four topics, because I have already discussed them all in some part or other of the preceding volumes of my work. I broadly deny that the church of Rome possesses any one of these characters. She is neither united, nor holy, nor catholic, nor apostolical. She is as full of divisions as all the Protestant communions together; she is as full of impiety and impurity

as any nation of infidels; she is not so catholic or universal as heathenism; she possesses no more of the apostolic character than Simon Magus or Elymas the sorcerer did. To lead a proof upon all these points would be to repeat what I have proved already under different heads, which the reader will easily find by consulting the tables of contents of "The Protestant." But it may be useful to give a short condensed view of some points, which I shall endeavour to do in as small a space as possible.

One of the first things—perhaps, the very first thing—that constitutes union in a church, is, that all the members acknowledge the same head. Now, on this first point, there is more union among the hundred sects of Protestants than there is in the one church of Rome. Protestants of every name, with one voice, acknowledge Jesus Christ alone as the Head of his church; and they acknowledge his authority alone in spiritual matters; that is, they will submit their consciences to no other. Even such national churches as acknowledge a head on earth, limit this headship to what is called the "state ecclesiastical," in which sense the king is head of the church of England. He presides over the temporalities of it; but in matters purely spiritual, an English Episcopalian will maintain the exclusive headship of Christ as firmly as any other Protestant. But the church of

Rome claims to have a spiritual head on earth, which head she believes infallible; and her members submit their consciences in spiritual matters to his supreme authority.

Now, it is very surprising that Papists are not, and never were, agreed as to who this head is; and therefore they are destitute of the first principle of church unity. One party says, It is the pope; a second makes it a general council; and a third says, It is neither the one nor the other, but both united. But it must be confessed, all parties are somewhat shy in giving an explicit opinion upon the subject. Like the Pharisees of whom Christ asked about the ministry of John,* "Was it from heaven, or of men?" who, perceiving that unpleasant consequences would follow a direct answer on either side, said, they could not tell; so Dr. Milner evades the question relating to the infallible head of the church. "Schoolmen," says he, "discuss some such points: but let me ask his lordship, (Dr. Porteus,) whether he finds any Catholic who denies or doubts that a general council, with the pope at its head, or that the pope himself, issuing a doctrinal decision, which is received by the great body of Catholic bishops, is secure from error? Most certainly not; and hence he may gather where all Catholics agree in lodging infallibility. In like manner, with respect to our

[* See the early volumes of "The Protestant."—Ed.]

national constitution, some lawyers hold that a royal proclamation, in such and such circumstances, has the force of a law; others, that a vote of the House of Lords or of Commons, or of both Houses together, has the same strength; but all subjects acknowledge that an Act of the King, Lords, and Commons, is binding upon them; and this suffices for all practical purposes." Part. i. p. 130. The church of Rome proves herself earthly by incessantly attempting to support herself by figures of earthly things; but the legs of such lame figures are never equal; and deductions of this kind from things worldly to things spiritual and heavenly, are seldom better than parables in the mouth of fools.

So far from telling us who is the infallible head of the church of Rome, Dr. Milner lets us know that he cannot tell. The schoolmen have differed about it; and "who shall decide when doctors disagree?" Hence he puts a question to Bishop Porteus, respecting his own knowledge of what Papists believe on the subject, from which "he *may gather* where all Catholics *agree* in lodging infallibility." And this must be nowhere; for all Catholics never agreed about it. Bishop Hay tells us, more honestly, that the church has never decided who her infallible head is. He says, it is not a question in which faith is concerned; and that one may believe accord-

ing as the reasons on each side preponderate. *Sincere Christ. chap.* xii. *Q.* 31. Then the church of Rome is, of all churches in the world, the farthest from unity, seeing she is not agreed as to who is her infallible head. This renders her agreement or disagreement about other matters of no importance whatever.

"For all practical purposes," however, I admit that the bulk of Papists believe the pope alone to be the infallible head of the church, for they can never know whether or not his doctrinal decisions are "received by the great body of Catholic bishops;" and therefore they have only himself to look to. This brings us back to the question of his supremacy, on which I shall give place to a correspondent, who adduces an argument against the supremacy, which I am sure the church of Rome will never answer.

"TO THE PROTESTANT.

"SIR,—You will highly gratify some of your friends, by giving an early publication to the following argument against the supremacy of the pope, which, as far as I know, is perfectly new. It is one of those numerous erudite exhibitions of talent which have lately been brought forward into public notice by an eminent lecturer* on Scripture criticism of our city; and it deserves most

* The Reverend Mr. Leech.

particular regard from you in this period of your work, when you are exposing the fallacy of grounding any part of our Christian belief on the tradition of the church of Rome. The question as now stated by themselves is not, Shall we reject all traditions, or all collateral aid from contemporary authority, when we proceed to give the true sense of Scripture?—for they admit that we do not thus reject traditionary evidence and assistance; but, Shall we advance their traditions to equal or superior authority with the Scriptures themselves? The Papists do not venture to impugn the authority of Scripture: what they contend for is, to place it on the same level with certain traditions, of which they say that their church has always been the repository; which traditions, they maintain, afford the genuine sense of Scripture, and throw light on the whole economy of the Christian revelation. This is the amount of their position: now let us see how they make it out.

"It is indispensably necessary for them to make out the supremacy and infallibility of the papal chair, the oracle which decides concerning their traditions, and all their peculiar rites and doctrines; and in order to this, to deduce this supremacy and infallibility from the apostle Peter, whom our Saviour is held to have entrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and with the

charge and custody of his people. This they must do; for if there be nowhere some supreme and infallible guide, who is visible to our eyes, and palpable to all our senses, their oral communications must rest precisely on their own peculiar evidence, and reach no higher estimation than their intrinsic value carries along with them. The pope's supremacy and infallibility, accordingly, form the corner stone of their system; and it is of such vital importance to it, that if it is not supported on its high, exalted, and preeminent place, the system itself must fall to the ground, like the arch when its keystone is removed. Indeed, if the civil and spiritual power of the pope were deprived of these attributes, it would crumble into nothing, and along with it bring down the whole fabric of Papal delusion. Indeed, his supremacy is so essentially important to the existence of the system, that if once set aside and abandoned, there would not be one tongue to move in defence of these abominations and absurdities, that have been palmed on the world under the name of legendary traditions.

"Now, the argument adduced by this truly eminent critic against the supremacy of the pope, as derived from the apostle Peter, is this:—Saint Peter, it is allowed on all hands, suffered martyrdom under the persecution of Nero, about the year of our Lord, 66. It is

enough for us at present to assume, that the Papists, from what they hold to be infallible authority, receive this to have been the time of his death. We know, moreover, and Scripture testifies the fact, that the beloved apostle John, to whom our blessed Redeemer committed the charge of his mother, lived about 40 years beyond this period, having, during his banishment under Domitian to Patmos, written the Apocalypse; and probably, at or near the same time, his Gospel and Epistles. Whence it appears, that this eminent apostle not only survived Peter many years, but was most actively and beneficially exercised during that period in the service of the church of Christ. A question thereupon occurs, How did it come to pass that this great apostle did not succeed to the supremacy of the church at the death of Peter, in place of Clement, or Linus, or Cletus, or Anacletus? — Why, seeing his fellow labourer, with whom he so often and so frequently exerted himself side by side, was removed from the earthly state of things, did not John take up the mantle that was dropped from him, and exercise that supremacy and infallibility on which the main stress of Christian belief was in all ages to depend? Why was he to submit to Pope Clement, and Pope Linus, and Pope Cletus, in the great articles of supremacy and infallibility? Did his high apostolic authority, de-

rived immediately and directly from our only Lord and Saviour, indeed succumb to these orderly supreme pontiffs, or was there during his life an eclipse of the Papal power? Whatever answer may be attempted to these questions, one thing is most evidently and prominently certain, that the apostle John was eminently qualified to have exercised the great offices attributed to the successors of Peter; and if their offices were so necessary in the church, as Papists say they are, it is wonderful, it is unaccountable, how he should not have been appointed to exercise them, now that Peter was out of the way, and he so well prepared for discharging them with equal or superior influence.

"But the force of the argument is not spent here. If it was necessary for the apostle John to submit to Pope Clement, or Pope Linus, why did he not manfully defend their authority, enforce the infallibility and supremacy of the new establishment, and give efficacy and force to its dictates by his apostolic power and authority, confirming the same by miracles, and illustrating its efficacy by the accompaniment of gifts and graces, conformably to the original destination of such power and authority? Most certainly such confirmation was much wanted, if popedom was necessary to give influence to the whole progress of Christian belief. But does the holy apostle thus lend his name or autho-

rity to the popedom and their system of traditions? Does he, in his writings, received by all of us as the dictates of inspiration, take no interest in this new yet permanent accession to the Christian church? Does this wonderful establishment, which is to bear legal sway for so many ages, derive no adequate support from his pen, either in the way of reconciling men's minds and feelings to it, or through his stating circumstances to render it congruous with the Christian scheme as already promulgated? Have Papists any tradition to account for that entire neglect of, and disrespect for, their system of supremacy and infallibility which this scheme indicates? Alas! if they could but think and feel rationally, they would hide their faces with shame; for they are not only destitute of this holy apostle's support, but have his whole authority in full array against them.

"As Papists now write and reason, and appeal to Scripture and to common sense in their defences, I will venture to push this whole argument one step farther. The apostle John affords us not only negative but positive proof against the supremacy and infallibility of the popedom and its traditionary legends.

"In the first place, he shows that the Christian faith gives light, and life, and joy; that its essence is spiritual, and that it is independent of all earthly and secular considera-

tions. Our Saviour's discourses, recorded by him — his answer to Pilate, his frequent appeals to the spirituality of his kingdom, and to the gift of the Holy Ghost, whose influences are to renew and sanctify the soul, abstractly from all external objects; these are delicate, but, to sincere lovers of the truth, cogent and irresistible reasonings against the Papacy, inasmuch as they attack its vital parts, while they allow its carcass to fall to pieces by its own weight. But the apostle proceeds further to depict the grand deceit then going on, or beginning to emerge. He uses the figure of a debauched woman, which he contradistinguishes from one whose love has been purified, and gives birth to the man child who is to rule the nations:—and he at the same time informs us, in so many words, that this debauched woman is the great city which rules over the earth, thereby furnishing us with an unerring clue to distinguish at once her seat and her character.—J. E."*

SECTION XIV.

It is one of the arts of the Romish church, to claim for herself, with the greatest confidence, those good qualities of which she is most notoriously destitute. By bold assertion and incessant repetition, she prevails upon her

* I regret that want of room obliges me to omit the sequel of this sensible letter.

own members, at least, to believe that she is what she calls herself, at the expense of refusing the evidence of their own senses. This applies to the article of her unity as well as that of her sanctity or holiness; for no man, who witnesses the evil practices of Papists, can, without discrediting his own senses, believe that she is a holy church; no more can any one, who knows her present state and ancient history, believe that she possesses the quality of union. This Dr. Milner lays down as the first mark of the true church, and he challenges the possession of it for his church alone. Now, union by itself is no mark of a true church, for many confederacies of wicked men are very firmly united. But I admit that a church destitute of union is not a true church, at least not a church in a Christian-like state; and this applies to the church of Rome above all other churches; for, as I showed in my last section, she is not united in the acknowledgment of one head; and as for the members, they are no more united in sentiment or affection than any other portion of the human race, whether heathen or Mohammedan.

A degree of union pervades all Protestant churches; I mean union in the acknowledgment of Divine truth, and the observance of Divine ordinances. This union is not dependent on the organization and connexion of any number of congregations in one repre-

sentative assembly, or under one patriarch or pope. In the New Testament we read of many churches which were not *so* united; and yet they were united in the sense in which church union ought always to exist. There was throughout them all but one Lord, one faith, one baptism; and this is the case in most Protestant churches at this day,—I should say, in all who have any right to the name of Protestant: and this union appears not merely in their public creeds and formularies, though it does appear there, but in what I consider far more important, namely, the union of many thousands of individuals to Jesus Christ and to one another, as members of his body, by the belief of the gospel which is preached among them. Perhaps this cannot be credibly affirmed of all the members of any Protestant church; but among all the churches, "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and who are thus united to himself and to one another; and it is only union in this sense that is of any real permanent value.

In the churches planted by the apostles, I suppose the proportion of members so united to one another and to their common head, was much greater than it has ever been since in any church; and, indeed, so far as appears, none were received, or allowed to continue members, who did not give credible evidence of being such; or if, in some cases,

it was otherwise, the churches themselves were subjected to apostolic rebuke. This perhaps accounts for the fact, that these churches, though quite distinct assemblies, were all of one communion; and thus they were more united than Protestant churches are. This was because they were more united in love of the truth, and in affection to one another; not because they were all of one opinion in every thing that they could think and speak about; not because they all practised the very same things, for the Jews observed circumcision and other rites, which the Gentiles did not.

If I shall be asked, why Protestant churches are not all of one communion, as the primitive churches were? I answer, without hesitation, It is because there is a fault somewhere among them; and perhaps it is a fault that pervades them all. I am not, like Papists, obliged to defend my sect as infallible, at all hazards, and "against all *deadly*." It is one of the privileges arising out of the Reformation, that no man is obliged to approve of all things, even in the Reformation itself; but every man is at liberty to express his mind, and to point out errors and mistakes in his own brethren, without giving just cause of offence. I believe the principal reason why Protestants are not all of one communion is, because they have not followed out their own fundamental principle

of the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the religion of Protestants. When they have all done this, they will be all of one communion, as Christians were at first, without the necessity of being all of one mind about every thing, or all observing precisely the same things, any more than the primitive churches were; and yet they may approach more nearly to union, even in these things, than the primitive Christians did, when things indifferent are left as the apostles left those things in which the kingdom of heaven does not consist. The best way to attain union on these points is, to let their comparative unimportance be on all hands admitted. People will then cease to dispute about them; and controversies among serious Christians will cease from want of matter to dispute about.

But, without being yet all of one communion, it is a fact, that Protestants are more united in their confession of Christian doctrine than Papists are. In other words, there is more variety and contrariety in the doctrines maintained by different orders within the church of Rome, than there is among all Protestant sects. For the truth of this assertion, I have only to refer to the furious controversies between the Dominicans and Franciscans; also the Jesuits and the Jansenists. I need not go into particulars, for the fact is known to every reader of church history; and surely it is more

unseemly for the church that professes to be one holy and united body, to have such feuds within its bosom, than for Protestant churches to have controversies while they do not pretend to be so united.

I have adverted to the fact that, in their creeds and public formularies, Protestant churches are agreed in the leading articles of Christian doctrine; so much so, that a work has been published, and is extant, in two thick volumes, containing a collection of confessions,* in which it is proved by the documents themselves, that the faith of the reformed churches in different nations is fundamentally and substantially the same, so far as relates to the Christian doctrine, or the way by which a sinner is saved, and taught to live to the glory of God, with the hope of happiness in his presence for ever. This is the sum and substance of Christian knowledge. In this Protestants are agreed. There is, therefore, more unity in their different communions than there is in the church of Rome in her one communion; for, on these fundamental points, the canons of councils and decrees of popes are so discordant that the poor people do not know whether they are to be saved wholly by Christ, or partly by themselves and by the merits of saints; and whether Christ has satisfied Divine

* [See "The Harmony of the Confessions of the Protestant Churches."—Ed.]

justice for them, or whether they must not satisfy for themselves, either in this world or in purgatory. Now she teaches one thing, and then another; and, after all, it turns out that she teaches nothing that can be depended upon, for every man is bound to receive all doctrines from the lips of his priest, though he should know him to be a man neither wiser nor better than himself.

I shall be told, that the creeds and formularies of churches are not a criterion by which we can ascertain the present state of religious belief, because, in some instances, a change has tacitly been effected, like that in the church of Geneva, as I mentioned in a late section. This is true, as regards individuals, in some Protestant churches; but I believe there is, notwithstanding this fact, as much agreement among Protestants as ever there was; I mean among Protestants who read the Scriptures, who think for themselves, and who have received the love of the truth; and it is only the agreement of such that is worthy of the name of Christian union. For the truth of this, I have only one humble document to refer to, and perhaps the evidence of it is the stronger, that it never pretended to be, and was never understood by any man to be, an exhibition of the religious belief of any one sect of Protestants; I mean this same work, entitled THE PROTESTANT. To my certain knowledge, it is read and

approved of by not a few of the established church in England and Ireland, including some of the hierarchy, and by many more of the church of Scotland. Among Presbyterian dissenters, of all denominations, it is generally read and approved; and Independents and Baptists of various classes regard me as a friend, and approve of my sentiments upon the whole, though I have made no account of their distinctive peculiarities. I have not pleaded the cause of any one of these sects, and I do not suppose that every sentiment which I have expressed is approved by all or any of them; but, so far as I know, I have not written a sentence which any of them regard as fundamentally erroneous, or inconsistent with the doctrine that Christ and his apostles taught.* Nay, from individuals of all these communions, I have letters positively expressing approbation of the principles which I have been maintaining throughout my work, which proves the fact, that thinking religious Protestants are more united in religious belief than they know themselves to be; and the fact leads me to infer, that, if

* It is right to mention here, that I have two correspondents who complain that I have erred exceedingly: one, because I deny the right of the civil magistrate to punish idolatry; the other, because I admit the lawfulness of eating blood and things strangled, at least have shown a leaning to that side of the question, but I do not know to what sect either of my correspondents belongs. This, so far as I know, is the sum total of my delinquencies in the esteem of Protestants.

serious Christians of all denominations were to meet on the neutral ground of the Bible alone, they would find that there was scarcely any difference of sentiment among them.

And I strongly suspect they will, ere long, find it necessary to meet on this common ground, for mutual defence against the common enemy. Popery is making more rapid strides towards ascendency than most people are aware of. Witness the laborious efforts of the Jesuits in France, under the name of missionaries; for they have assumed this as a more popular designation, and less liable to excite suspicion than the odious, and for a time proscribed, name of Jesuit. Witness also the proceedings in Ireland.* To please the Papists, seeing nothing else will please them, we must break down every barrier that prevents them from acquiring ascendency in Ireland at least; and so, just from a fear of being murdered by them, we will admit them to such power in the state, that it will be at their own discretion whether death, or banishment, or conversion, shall be the lot of all the Protestants in the kingdom.

With such things in prospect—and what man who studies the signs of the times will say there is not a prospect of such things?—every Protestant ought to be ready to unite with every other for common defence. I am

* [The author here refers specially to some events then recent.—ED.]

not recommending an armament for the purpose of defence in a military conflict; but the union of all sound Protestants for the defence of the truth in opposition to error, by prayer to God, by propagating the gospel, by education, and circulating every kind of useful knowledge. These are weapons by which the reign of darkness must fall—by which men will, by degrees, be withdrawn from the ranks of Popery, and by means of which the system will ultimately be overthrown.

On this subject, I am happy to have the concurrence of an author of the first eminence, namely, Dr. Owen, in a small tract, republished in the present year by the Bishop of St. David's. This tract was written a short time before the revolution, when there was a great tendency towards Popery; and the following is suggested as one of the means for preserving the Protestant religion:—"It is also necessary hereunto, that all those who sincerely own this religion, and make it the rule of their living unto God, in hopes of the eternal enjoyment of him in another world, do depose the consideration of the lesser differences amongst themselves, and *unite in one common design and interest to oppose the entrances and growth of Popery among us.* And it is an hard thing to persuade rational men that they are in earnest for its opposition and exclusion, who are not willing so to do." *A*

Brief and Impartial Account of the Nature of the Protestant Religion, its present State in the World, its Strength and its Weakness, etc. By John Owen, D.D.

Having had the vanity or presumption, call it what you will, to adduce my own work as an evidence of union of sentiment among Protestants, I shall, by way of balancing accounts, adduce the work of my great opponent as an evidence of the disunion and discord that exist among Papists. I began to write upon my own sole responsibility, and it would not have been surprising if, instead of being generally approved by all sects of Protestants, I had provoked the hostility of all; for this has happened to some authors of great zeal and acuteness, in consequence of their confining their views to some narrow sectarian point. But Mr. Andrews, The Catholic Vindicator, was chosen and deputed by persons of his own body, as one qualified to advocate the cause of Popery, and to write down THE PROTESTANT. They had good reason for their choice, for he was highly commended by Dr. Milner, whose patronage he seemed to enjoy, and who certifies the orthodoxy and general excellence of some of his writings, particularly his school book. Surely, then, it might have been expected that all Papists would approve the sentiments of such a writer. But what was the fact? Bishop Cameron declared upon oath, that

his writings were not approved by the more respectable of his brethren in Scotland, and as for the bishop's own opinion, he declares he approved "of nothing from that man." He declares, also, his conviction that Mr. Scott did not approve of his writings; and yet it is proved on oath that he exhorted his people in his chapel to buy them. Next, Mr. Andrews is introduced as deponing that Mr. Scott, as he was informed, first approved and afterwards disapproved of his work; and further, that it "*was* approved by respectable English Catholics," but not "encouraged, as it did not succeed." *See Jury Trial, etc.** Among other sects, there would be no importance attached to these differences of opinion about any human writings; but in the church of Rome they are of importance, as showing that she does not possess the union to which she pretends. There the faith of one is declared to be the faith of all; and Dr. Milner challenges us to go to the Royal Exchange in London, and examine Catholics from the four points of the compass, assuring us that they will all confess the same things, so perfectly is the church of Rome agreed about every article of faith. But, from the instance which I have given, it is certain that at home they are not agreed: and they cannot get out of this dilemma, as they usually do in

* [The published account of an action for damages brought by a Papist against Mr. M'Gavin.—Ed.]

such cases, by asserting that the controversy was not about articles of faith, for such, indeed, it was; and Mr. Andrews wrote at great length about transubstantiation, and other articles equally important.

The above facts, trifling as they appear, cut deep into Dr. Milner's system; for he tells us that the common people receive their religion from their parish priest, knowing that his doctrine must agree with that of his bishop, which must agree with that of all the other bishops. But here, incidentally, we have Bishop Cameron, diocesan of the lowlands of Scotland, and Bishop Milner, vicar apostolic of the midland district of England, directly pitted against each other in reference to another work. Bishop Milner approves and strongly recommends the system of religious instruction contained in Mr. Andrews' school book, and Bishop Cameron swears that he approves of NOTHING *from that man.* Then, certainly, these two bishops are not agreed; most probably the priests under them are also divided; indeed they must be so, seeing every priest is accountable to his bishop for the doctrine he teaches; and what are the poor people to do all this while? How can they know which is the true doctrine of the church? The fact is, they do not and cannot know any of the matter from the teaching of such guides. The blind lead the blind, and both must fall into the ditch.

But leaving these local and petty squabbles to be settled between our Scottish and English bishops at their leisure, I remark that the church of Rome, viewed as a whole, so far from being the most united, is the most schismatical church on the face of the earth. Schism is not the separation of one church from the communion of another, but the creation and maintaining of parties in the same church. The most schismatical church mentioned in the New Testament was that in Corinth. There was nothing there that in modern language would be called dissent or separation; but Paul tells them that there were divisions (σχισματα, that is, schisms) among them. Now, these schisms consisted in this:—one said, I am of Paul; another, I of Apollos; another, I of Cephas; and another, I of Christ, 1 Cor. i. 11, 12. The last party was as bad as any, for it was making Christ the head of a party *among Christians*, and in opposition to his own faithful apostles. Now, the practice which the apostle condemns in the Corinthian church, has prevailed in the church of Rome for many centuries, with the concurrence of popes and councils, and it continues in full operation to this day. One says, I am of Benedict; another, I am of Francis; another, I am of Dominick; and another, I am of Jesus; and the last is the most wicked of the whole, that is, the Jesuits. These holy fraternities vilify and condemn

one another, and when the mendicants of different orders used to meet on a begging expedition, they would hold a pitched battle, like as many wild Irishmen on a holiday, of which some edifying examples are to be found, I think, in Godwin's Life of Chaucer. This is an example of schism in the true sense of the word, and as nothing like this exists in Protestant churches, we are entitled to call the church of Rome the only schismatical church in the western world. I challenge Dr. Milner to reply to this statement.

But I have a still heavier charge against the church of Rome, on account of her many divisions. The very head has often been divided against itself. There have been popes and anti-popes; and in one age there were three living and reigning at one time, presiding over "Catholic unity," and at the same time cursing, excommunicating, and actually levying war against one another. One schism of this sort lasted no less than fifty years. The rival popes each created cardinals, and performed all the other functions, which, according to the doctrine of their own church, could be done by only one man—the successor of St. Peter. One of these popes must necessarily have been a usurper, and every spiritual function conferred by him must have been null and void. All the bishops and priests consecrated and ordained by his authority were mere laymen, and all that they and their

successors have ordained, down to the present day, are no more; for Dr. Milner himself will allow that no man can canonically and validly communicate spiritual faculties, which he has not himself canonically received from the real head of the church. Now, it has never yet been ascertained which of the rival popes under each schism was the genuine vicar of Christ, and therefore no priest living can be sure that his faculties are good and lawfully come by. It is ten to one that Pius VII. himself is come of some false line, and if so, all the Popish clergy in the world are reduced to the rank of mere laymen. I defy any one of them to prove that his ordination is legitimate. I hold it, therefore, demonstrated, that by the schism of her rival popes, according to her own doctrine, the church of Rome was guilty of suicide. Since that event, she has been only the ghost of a united church, and it requires no ordinary portion of impudence in such men as Bossuet and Dr. Milner to accuse Protestants of divisions and variations, when their own church, still boasting of infallibility, is riven from head to foot, exhibiting nothing but a confused chaos of rude materials, none of which can be proved ever to have been connected with an undoubted successor of St. Peter.

SECTION XV.

DR. MILNER'S second mark of the true church is SANCTITY, or holiness. The only dispute I have with him on this point is, that, instead of the *second*, I would call it the *first* and the *last*, and the *only decisive* mark of a true church. He cites the words of Paul to the Ephesians in support of his proposition; and I cite the same words in support of mine: "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," chap. v. ver. 25—27. If Dr. Milner could show that this is descriptive of the church of Rome, the controversy would be at an end; and it would be the duty of all men to join themselves to her. But he does not so much as attempt to show that she is the church here described. He takes it for granted, indeed; and does not seem to think it requires any proof. He never knew or heard of any other true church. He has had his mind preoccupied from infancy with only one idea of the word "church;" that is, of a worldly, visible society, owning spiritual subjection to his lord, the pope of Rome. Higher than this his mind cannot rise; beyond this it cannot expand; and it is just as

impervious to spiritual illumination on the subject, as the eyeballs of the blind are to the light of the sun. I have heard of a blind man, who said he understood the colour of scarlet to be like the sound of a trumpet. If this had got possession of his mind, it would be impossible for all the colour makers and opticians in the world to convey to him a more correct idea of scarlet colour; so he whose mind is preoccupied by the Popish notion of the church, cannot comprehend what is meant by the apostle in the passage above quoted.

This church consists of all the redeemed from among men, of every kindred, nation, and language; of all who have died in the faith of Christ, who are described as the spirits of just men made perfect; and of all who are now living in the same faith, and are followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. This church is holy; the former branch of it perfectly so; the latter only in part, but following on towards perfection. This heavenly united society has a representation, but a very imperfect one, in a visible Christian church, in which God's word is preached and believed, and his commandments obeyed; and wherever I find such a society, I call it *a* church of Christ, not THE church, for the definite article has nothing to do in this connexion, except as distinguishing between a church in

one place, and one in another place; as the church in Jerusalem, the church in Antioch, etc.

Every such church is, or ought to be, holy; not merely as respects the belief of sound doctrine, though I hold this to be indispensable; but also in the religious and moral character of its members. This I take to be the only decisive mark of a true church—that its members be holy men; that is, men who, believing the gospel, are taught, under its influence, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in the present world. Without this, a church may have a creed as orthodox as the twelve apostles could make it, and yet be no better than a synagogue of Satan. What is true of individuals is also true of communities:—"If *any man* have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9; from which the inference is unavoidable, that a church composed of men who have not the Spirit of Christ, cannot be a church of his; and this, as I shall show by and by, cuts off the church of Rome from all pretension to be *a* church; much more from being *the* only church of Christ.

Churches, in old times, were addressed as saints and faithful in Christ Jesus; and that this was not the language of compliment, but really descriptive of their character, is certain from its being written by inspiration

of the Holy Ghost. These churches were composed of men and women who had been unbelieving Jews or idolatrous heathens, and addicted to many wicked practices; but when they received the gospel, they forsook their sins, and became holy persons, that is, saints. Paul, addressing the Christians in Corinth, gives a description of very great sinners; and adds, "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. The best of them were but imperfectly sanctified, for perfection in this sense is reserved for the next world; and one at least turned out so very wicked, that they were commanded to put him away; but, upon the whole, their prevailing character was that of "sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints," 1 Cor. i. 2. And surely no man will deny that churches ought to be so still. It is only in so far as they are so, that they are obedient to the will of God, and so far as they are otherwise, they approach towards antichrist.

It was a very wicked fancy that began early to prevail, that the word "saint" applied only to great and distinguished individuals in the churches, such as apostles and evangelists. This idea soon became universal, and all the churches experienced the evil influence of it; for it was no longer reckoned necessary

that all the members of churches should be holy men, or give credible evidence of being such. Multitudes were received into fellowship, who had not abandoned their heathen principles or wicked practices. Then it became necessary to accommodate both the worship and the language of Christians to the taste of such persons, and unnecessary that all Christians should be holy men; it was enough that they had a saint or two in a century, such as *saint* Cyprian, *saint* Jerome, and *saint* Augustine; and it is a fact, that Dr. Milner does not so much as attempt to prove the holiness of the church of Rome from the character of its members as a body; but only from her having such saints as the above to boast of, along with her holy creeds and her holy sacraments. This is the sum total of the sanctity that the "holy Catholic church" pretends to. In her vocabulary, such words as these have no meaning: "Without holiness," that is, without being a *saint*, "NO MAN shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. And this also condemns the impiety of those nominal Protestants with whom the word "saint" is a term of reproach.

But it is time to attend to Dr. Milner's own statement:—

"The comparison," says he, "which I am going to institute between the Catholic church and the leading Protestant societies in the article of sanctity or holiness, will be

made on these four heads: first, the *doctrine* of holiness; secondly, the *means* of holiness; thirdly, the *fruits* of holiness; and lastly, the *Divine testimony* of holiness." Then he proceeds, as follows, to show how unholy Protestant churches are, in respect of doctrine; and I am sure no Protestant church in the world will recognize its own faith in the representation. "To consider, first, the doctrine of the chief Protestant communions: this is well known to have been originally grounded in the pernicious and impious principles, that God is the author and necessitating cause, as well as the everlasting punisher, of sin; that man has no free will to avoid sin; and that justification and salvation are the effects of an enthusiastic *persuasion* under the name of *faith*, that the person is actually justified and saved without any real belief in the revealed truths; without hope, charity, repentance for sin, benevolence to our fellow creatures, loyalty to our king and country, or any other virtues; all which were censured by the first Reformers, as they are by the strict Methodists still, under the name of works, and by many of them declared to be even hurtful to salvation." *Letter* xix.

The reader will probably pause here with astonishment, and inquire within himself, what sort of monsters these are which he is reading about? and, looking back to the

beginning of the extract, he will find that they are "the chief Protestant communions;" namely, the churches of England and Scotland, the Lutherans of Germany, and the Calvinists of France and Geneva; and he will find himself constrained to exclaim, that such a piece of barefaced literary villany was never imposed upon the world. Dr. Milner himself is not such a dolt as not to know that the above representation is false throughout, and therefore, though he could prove that all the rest of his church were as holy as the virgin Mary, the leaven of his wilful misrepresentation and falsehood would contaminate the whole mass, unless he were immediately excommunicated. Truly that must be *a holy* church, that requires for her defence such wicked and abominable artifice!

The means which he has taken to establish the truth of his shocking accusation are no less absurd and impudent than the accusation itself. The charge is laid against the chief Protestant *communions*, or churches. Does he then go to the Confessions, Articles, and public Formularies of these communions, to show what they really professed to believe? No such thing. I have gone over all his quotations and references, to the number of about thirty, and there is not the least allusion to the Confession of any reformed church, except one general reference to some of the articles of the church of England; but

he takes care not to give the words, lest the reader should see that they do not bear him out in his charges, and thus detect the imposition. He satisfies himself with detached and distorted scraps, or parts of sentences, from the writings of individuals, such as Luther and Calvin, for which no church is responsible; and which, therefore, it is not worth while to analyze. It was the misfortune of Luther that he began to write books before his own mind was much enlightened upon some abstruse points; and it is no wonder that in such circumstances he often expressed himself foolishly and rashly. Yet I have no doubt, if the shreds of sentences which Dr. Milner has quoted with so much triumph, were restored to their places in the original works, and read in their connexion, much of that which is revolting in them would disappear.

Calvin wrote with more consideration and precision than Luther; and though I am no more interested in defending him than the other, I shall show by one instance how he is abused by a garbled quotation. "Calvin says," says Dr. Milner, "Calvin says, 'God requires nothing of us but faith; he asks nothing of us but that we believe.' Calv. in Joan. vi. Rom. i. Gal. ii." I have not Calvin's works at hand, and though I had, I would not think it worth while to turn to the passages; for I am very sure that he must be

speaking of justification; and that, in order to this, God requires nothing but faith, which is the Bible doctrine, let Papists say what they will.* But Dr. Milner, by giving these words detached from their connexion, wishes his readers to understand, that Calvin teaches, that God requires no other obedience whatever but believing, which I am persuaded this reformer never taught, though I do not profess to be intimately acquainted with his ponderous and multifarious writings.

Dr. Milner's object, in these mutilated extracts from Luther, Calvin, and others, is to make it appear that they were enemies of good works, and wrote against them; and thence he infers the unholy character of the Protestant religion. If these writers had been enemies of good works, their error would not have attached to churches or individuals, who never professed to believe in them, and who never wished to be called by their names. But, in point of fact, both Luther and Calvin maintained the necessity of good works, more strongly than any Papist can do upon his principles; and of this Dr. Milner himself furnishes abundant evidence, by quoting the

* [Thus, on Rom. i. 17, Calvin says, "The principal point of this first part of the epistle is, That we are justified only of the mercy of God by faith." In the same passage, he speaks decidedly of the growth of the Christian's righteousness, and closes by condemning those who seek to defend and maintain themselves in vice. The assertion of Dr. Milner as to Calvin, is neither more nor less than an absolute falsehood.—ED.]

words of these reformers, in which they deplore, in the most feeling manner, the sins which they knew to be practised by many who professed to be reformed from Popery, which does not indicate that they were lovers of sin and enemies of righteousness. The fact is, neither Luther, nor Calvin, nor any other author whom Protestants acknowledge, will be found to write against good works, except as entering into the ground or meritorious cause of our justification. In this view, it is admitted that all works but the work of Christ are condemned by consistent Protestants; and they were also condemned by Christ's own ambassadors, when they declared, that by the works of the law no flesh could be justified. There were never more strenuous advocates for the necessity of good works than they were, but they would not put them in the place of the Saviour. It was the same with Luther, and Calvin, and other Reformers; and this is the head and front of their offence. They knocked on the head, and exposed to the scorn of the world, the Popish doctrine of the merit of works, and under the shame of this exposure the church of Rome has no resource but to make them appear the enemies of good works; just as the Pharisees of old could find nothing against Christ, but by inferring from the fact of his being the friend of publicans and sinners, that he must have been a sinner

Dr. Milner is charitable enough to admit that modern Protestants have, in general, abandoned the impious doctrines taught by the reformers, and that a "tacit reformation," like that in Geneva, has taken place in most or all of the Protestant churches. Then he should withdraw his accusation of the unholiness of their doctrines. But instead of this, he will have it to be unholy still. He will have us to be believers in an unholy creed, though he represents us all as Socinians, who are as far removed as himself from what he calls the impious doctrine of justification by faith. "After all," says he, "the first and most sacred branch of holy doctrine consists in those articles which God has been pleased to reveal concerning his own Divine nature and operations, namely, the articles of the unity and trinity of the Deity, and of the incarnation, death, and atonement of the consubstantial Son of God. It is admitted that these mysteries have been abandoned by the Protestants of Geneva, Holland, and Germany. With respect to Scotland, a well-informed writer says: 'It is certain that Scotland, like Geneva, has run from high Calvinism to almost as high Arianism or Socinianism; the exceptions, especially in the cities, are few.' It will be gathered from many passages, which I have cited in my former letters, how widely extended, throughout the established church, is that tacit reform, which

a learned professor of its theology signifies to be the same thing with Socinianism. A judgment may also be formed of the prevalence of this system by the Act of July twenty-first, 1813, exempting the professors of it from the penalties to which they were before subject." *Letter* xix. p. 42.

Though not directly bearing upon the present subject, I remark, in passing, that the repeal of the Act that made it a crime against the state to deny the doctrine of the Trinity, is understood by Dr. Milner as indicating a general leaning towards Socinianism, which consists in the denial of that doctrine, and such other doctrines as are dependent upon it. The inference is very absurd, as well as untrue; for seeing the Socinians, with all their errors and absurdities, do not own subjection of any kind to a foreign power, the most orthodox statesman could consent to the repeal of a statute against them, without compromising his own religious principles, or endangering the peace of the country. But it is of importance here to notice in what light Papists view things, especially such a distinguished pillar of the Romish church, as Dr. Milner doubtless is. It seems the repeal of the statute against the Socinians indicates a general tendency of the people towards Socinianism. Then it follows, that the late repeal of the penal statutes against Popery indicates a tendency towards Popery; and if

the statutes which remain, and which exclude Papists from political power, shall be repealed, then it will prove not merely a tendency, but that the nation is very far gone towards Popery. I leave the advocates of "Catholic Emancipation" to make the best of this disclosure. When "Emancipation" shall be conceded, it will be considered by Papists as a proof that the nation has become Popish; for they feel within themselves that they would not make such a concession upon any other principle than conversion, or a prospect of conversion to the faith of Rome; and, therefore, they can have no idea of concession being made to them, but upon the supposition that we are about to adopt their religion. When this shall take place, how much will their zeal for making proselytes be increased!*

What Dr. Milner has quoted from a "*well-informed writer*," whose name, however, he conceals, respecting the Socinianism of the church of Scotland, reminds me of the assertion of a late French traveller, who passed through this country, who has made a book of his travels, and who gravely tells his readers that in Scotland the *ladies* generally go without stockings and shoes. Every man who

* [The reader will bear in mind that this was written in 1822. Though alluding to events then passing, and the conclusion may not be universally admitted, it seemed necessary to retain the passage on account of the illustration.—Ed.]

trusts his own eyes knows it to be an impudent falsehood; but it is not more impudent than the assertion of Dr. Milner's "well-informed writer," that our clergy, or even our people, have run into Socinianism, and that "the exceptions, especially in the cities, are few." I believe there is no country in what is called Christendom more free of this leaven than Scotland is. Within my own recollection, there have been only two ministers of the church of Scotland who publicly avowed Socinian sentiments. One of them, on the remonstrances of his brethren, and perhaps in order to retain his living, made a public recantation, such as it was. The other, being less notorious, and being understood to be in a state of dotage, was not called upon to recant, though he outlived his younger colleague many years. With him died the Socinianism of the church of Scotland, so far as appears from the acknowledged writings of any of its ministers, and but for the inroads of two or three zealots, chiefly from England, who call themselves rational dissenters, the name would scarcely have been remembered in this part of the world. For any thing I know, there may be individuals, and even ministers in the church of Scotland, who privately hold Socinian sentiments, and who even preach them in a covert way, where there is no danger of detection; but I am persuaded the proportion of such among

our respectable ministers will not be found greater than the proportion of our *ladies* who do not wear shoes and stockings. The people of Scotland with shame must admit the fact, that elegant young females, with all the signs of ladyship that dress can give, from the head to the ancles, are sometimes seen upon our public roads walking "barefoot." They are not *ladies*, however, in the received meaning of the term, and would not, with their *nudity of understandings*, be received into the company of ladies. No more would an avowed Socinian, if such were to appear among us, be acknowledged a true minister of the church of Scotland, or hailed as a brother by truly respectable sons.

Amidst the charges which Dr. Milner brings against Protestants on account of unholy doctrine, he does not, so far as I recollect, accuse the Reformers of being more wicked in their own conduct than their neighbours were. Most Popish writers have done so, and all such have been detected in falsehood. Dr. Milner, no doubt aware of this, forbears direct assertion, and has recourse to sly insinuation. Thus, when speaking of Luther and his friends, he usually throws in a qualifying expression, calculated to make them appear gay men of the world, that is, *good livers*, not in the Christian, but in the libertine sense of the words. "Luther and his *bottle companion* Amsdorf," are favourite

expressions of his; but he has not adduced a particle of evidence, or stated a single circumstance, by which it appears that these persons were given to excess in any respect whatever. He refers, indeed, to another work of his, in which, he says, he has described the wicked lives of the Reformers. But this work I have not seen; and if I had, I suppose I would find no more in it than what the Catholic Vindicator and Amicus Veritatis have written, the falsehood of which I have already exposed.

SECTION XVI.

Dr. Milner, having occupied a number of pages in describing the *unholiness* of the Protestant doctrine, comes at last to describe the holiness of the doctrine of his church; which he does as follows:—"If this was once *holy*, namely, in the apostolic age, it is holy still; because the church never changes her doctrine, nor suffers any person in her communion to change it, or to question any part of it. Hence the adorable mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, etc. taught by Christ and his apostles, and defined by the four first general councils, are now as firmly believed by every real Catholic, throughout her whole communion, as they were when those councils were held. Concerning the article of man's justification, so far from holding the impious and absurd doctrines imputed to her

by her unnatural children, (who sought for a pretext to desert from her,) she rejects, she condemns, she anathematizes them! It is then false, and notoriously false, that Catholics believe, or in any age did believe, that they could justify themselves by their own proper merits; or that they can do the least good, in the order of salvation, without the grace of God, merited for them by Jesus Christ; or that we can deserve this grace, by any thing we have the power of doing; or that leave to commit sin, or even the pardon of any sin which has been committed, can be purchased by any person whomsoever; or that the essence of religion, and our hopes of salvation, consist in forms and ceremonies, or in any other exterior things," *Letter* xix. p. 43.

The above is Dr. Milner's exposition of the doctrine of the church of Rome, as opposed to that of Protestant churches. She holds, it seems, "the adorable mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, *et cetera;*" and he wishes his readers to understand that Protestants do not hold these mysteries; for no other reason can be given why he presents them by way of contrast with the Protestant doctrine. This is another instance of barefaced imposition, as he knows very well. On the subject of justification, he labours hard to express himself as much in the style of Protestants as he possibly can, in order to make it appear that Papists do not trust in their own merits; and

to make the difference between his doctrine and that of Protestants, upon a fundamental point, appear very trifling. But the idiom of Ashdod is distinctly perceived in his feeble attempt to speak the language of Canaan. He seems as if he would renounce the error of justification by works; but his mode of expression is so perplexed and equivocal, that it may convey to the mind of a Papist the very thing which he professes to renounce; indeed, he himself must understand the words in a sense which admits of justification by works, else he runs into what he calls the pernicious and impious error of justification by faith, or justification by some other medium which he does not name. I take it for granted, however, that there are only two methods by which men expect to be justified; namely, faith and works. The former was maintained by Luther and Calvin, and all the reformed churches; and it is condemned by Dr. Milner as a most impious doctrine, and hostile to all good works. Then he must hold the other doctrine, that justification or salvation is, in some sense, by works, or by men's own merits, which is the doctrine of the church of Rome; and his attempt to deny it by a few equivocal expressions, is only another instance of Jesuitical trickery, intended to deceive the simple.

After all their abuse of the Protestant doctrine, we sometimes find Popish writers

labouring to make it appear that there is no great difference between their faith and ours. This is the case with Dr. Milner. He states *as Protestant doctrines* certain absurdities which he knows we do not believe; and having, as he thinks, refuted these, he gives what he takes to be Protestant doctrine as correctly as *he* can express it; and then he tells us that this is the doctrine of the church of Rome, and that she condemns and anathematizes the contrary! This is, indeed, one of the arts by means of which Popish priests are continually endeavouring to make proselytes; and those who are ignorant of all religion are easily imposed upon by a few equivocal expressions, to believe that the Protestant and Popish belief are nearly, if not precisely, the same. I do not know a better answer to such a misrepresentation, than that which was made by a French peasant, a late convert from Popery, in consequence of his reading the Scriptures, as related by a French gentleman at a public meeting here. "Why did you change your religion?" said a Papist to the young convert, "there is no great difference between the Catholic and the Protestant." "Only this difference," said the other, "you worship the God that the priest makes—we worship the God that made the priest."

Dr. Milner however shows, that he cannot state either the Protestant faith or his own,

without grossly blundering. He speaks of the grace of God as *merited* for us by Jesus Christ, which is a great and fundamental error, as I suppose the more intelligent divines of his own church, if there be any more intelligent among them, will condemn as well as any Protestant. To say that the grace of God was *merited* for us, even by Jesus Christ, is to be guilty of the impiety of denying that God is in himself gracious. It is to represent God the Father as all austerity and rigour, and requiring the interposition of the Son to move him to grace and compassion. Now, we know from Scripture, that the Father is in himself infinitely gracious and merciful. He needed no intercession to make him so; but because he was full of mercy He provided a Saviour for us. It was He who said, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom," Job xxxiii. 24. "God *so* loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlastasting life," John iii. 16. Christ's work of obedience and suffering is called the work which the Father gave him to do: and the apostles teach us to ascribe our salvation to the free, unmerited love of God the Father: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv. 10. Christ, therefore, did not procure, or in any

sense merit, the grace of God for us; but by his atoning sacrifice of himself he removed that which stood in the way of its exercise. Holiness and justice are as essential attributes of Deity as mercy. These required the punishment of sin. Christ voluntarily took this upon himself; and by suffering the penalty of transgression in his own person, he made it consistent with the righteousness of God to pardon sin; that is, to exercise mercy in the salvation of the guilty. Hence he is both just, and at the same time the justifier of the ungodly who believe in the name of Christ.

This is the Protestant doctrine; and as it vindicates the holiness of God, and magnifies his law, it is also holy in its tendency: not considered merely as a part of an orthodox creed, for in this sense it may be held without producing any holiness of conduct; but as it is received as a living, Divine principle of holiness, implanted by the Holy Spirit in the heart of them that believe in Christ. But Dr. Milner speaks of the holy doctrines of his church as persons speak of articles of dress, the fashion of which does not change. If her doctrine "was once holy," "it is holy still; because the church never changes her doctrine, nor suffers any persons in her communion to change it, or to question any part of it." This may be true enough, while yet it signifies nothing, seeing it relates merely

to what the church has in her creed, but not written in the hearts of her members, and which even in her creed is rendered inoperative by its association with error.

I need not follow Dr. Milner through his longwinded description of the *means* of sanctity, which are, of course, his seven sacraments, and the public service of his church, including the sacrifice of the mass, because I have, under the different heads of penance, transubstantiation, extreme unction, etc., exposed the absurdity and impiety of most of these things. I pass on, therefore, to what he calls the fruits of sanctity which have been produced in the church of Rome.

These, as I said in my last section, are certain individuals called saints, about the average of two or three in a century, whom he names, such as St. Dunstan, St. Augustine of Canterbury, St. Chad, St. Swithin, St. Dominic, St. Bonaventure, etc.; and because the church of Rome produced such men, she is the *holy*, and must be the only true church! He gives, indeed, a general view of her holiness in the following terms: "It is certain that the supernatural virtues, and heroical sanctity of a countless number of holy personages, of different countries, ranks, professions, and sexes, have illustrated the Catholic church in every age, with an effulgence which cannot be disputed or withstood," part ii. p. 63. St. Dominic, for instance, he

should have told us, *illustrated* the church by the *effulgence* of the flames which he kindled for burning heretics to death, and by establishing the *holy* inquisition in order to keep the flame continually alive!

But to come nearer home, Dr. Milner challenges the following comparison between the saints of his church and the sinners of the Reformation, not doubting that the holiness will be found on the side of the saints, as doubtless it ought to be. "Let them, from the very accounts of Protestant historians, compare, as to religion and morality, Archbishop Cranmer with his rival, Bishop Fisher; Protector Seymour with Chancellor More; Ann Bulleyn with Catharine of Arragon; Martin Luther and Calvin with Francis Xavierius and Cardinal Pole; Beza with St. Francis Sales; Queen Elizabeth with Mary Queen of Scots: these contrasted characters having more or less relation with each other. From such a comparison, I have no sort of doubt what the decision of your friends will be concerning them, in point of their respective holiness," p. 64. It is difficult to believe a man not in jest, who institutes a comparison between the two queens last mentioned on the point of *holiness* of character, especially when he means to maintain that Mary was the *holiest* of the two! But he is perfectly in earnest; though one can scarcely help thinking that he attaches a meaning of his own to

the word holiness; or perhaps he proceeds upon the principle, avowed in private, by the flatterers of public men, who ascribe all the virtues most profusely to those whom they know to be most destitute, and who therefore have most need of them.

I have no doubt, that, upon Dr. Milner's own data, it could easily be shown that the advantage, in point of holiness, is on the side of the Protestants, whom he is pleased to contrast with the great men of Rome, at least among those who professed to be religious Protestants, such as Luther, Calvin, and Beza; and as for the Protestant queen and protector, on the one hand, and the Popish queen and chancellor, on the other, it is of no importance to which of them we ascribe most of that which none of them possessed. But it must be a miserable church, that can produce no better evidence of its holiness than two or three individuals in an age, and even these not better than the average of mere men of the world. An inspired apostle condemns such comparisons of men among themselves, and therefore I shall let this alone. I shall not even attempt to prove that Protestant churches are holier than that of Rome, for we have nothing to boast of; but seeing the church of Rome is incessantly boasting of her holiness, I shall endeavour to humble her a little for her own benefit.

At the time of the Reformation, and for

ages before, the corruption of manners in the church of Rome was so great and so universal, that any man who possessed the least regard for decency of character was quite shocked by it. The writers of those days have left on record the most ample testimony to this effect; not writers of the Reformation only, but also men of great note, who lived and died in the church of Rome, have left their testimony against her monstrous and abominable wickedness. I could fill volumes with extracts on this subject, from the writings of men high in rank and office in the church, which would overwhelm our modern Papists with confusion, if they were not hardened beyond all feeling of shame. If it be asked why I bring the guilt of past ages to the view of the present age, as if I meant to make the children responsible for the deeds of their fathers, I answer, Because they maintain that their church never was at any time otherwise than a holy church; and because if it be admitted that she does not now present features of such horrible wickedness and bloody cruelty, it is because the light of the Reformation has shamed her out of much which she formerly practised without a blush; and I might add, because her character at the period of the Reformation was such as to justify every honest man in separating from a body with which he could not continue united

without being polluted, and hazarding the salvation of his soul.

Some time before the Reformation, the cardinal of Cambray wrote as follows:—"That although they are great evils which we see, yet, unless the church be speedily reformed, we shall in a short time see unspeakably greater; after those horrible thunders we have already heard, we shall presently hear others that are more horrible." After reciting the complaints of St. Bernard, of the corrupt state of the church in his time, the cardinal proceeds:—"If these things were spoken by blessed Bernard, they may now much more be said, because since his time the church hath proceeded from bad to worse; and in the whole state, as well spiritual as secular, virtue being abandoned, it hath fallen into the shame and filthiness of vice." For this, and the other quotations which follow, in this section, I am indebted to the first discourse in the Preservative against Popery, entitled, "The Reformation Vindicated, on account of the necessity of it," in which the most particular references are given, and usually the very words of the original Latin in the margin.

Nicholas de Clemangis writes:—"That wicked persons did so much abound in all professions of men, that scarce one among a thousand was to be found who did sincerely

live answerably to their professions; and if there was any one who was honest, chaste, and frugal, and did not follow this lewd kind of life, he was made a laughing-stock to others, and was presently called either an insolent and singular madman, or else a hypocrite." The cardinal of Lorrain, in the council of Trent, in a speech on the subject, attributes all the calamities which had befallen France to the gross and general corruption of manners.

But Dr. Milner will excuse himself, and justify his church, by telling the world that these descriptions refer to laymen only, and that the church of Rome never professed to make them too holy in this world, for then there would have been no need of priestly absolution or purgatorial fire; and there would have been no more use for priests than there was for hangmen in the days of King Alfred. Let us see, then, how it was with the priests themselves, those *holy* men who could save the most unholy by means of holy oil, and a few Latin words. Cardinal Julian, in his epistle to pope Eugenius IV. tells him: "That the people were above measure incensed against the ecclesiastical state, by the dissolute lives of the clergy, for which," says he, "it is greatly to be feared, unless they mend their manners, lest the laymen, after the example of the Hussites, fall foul upon the whole clergy. And in truth, this deformity

administers great boldness to the Bohemians, and gives a fair colour to their errors, who especially inveigh against the filthiness of the clergy." The suffragan bishop of Saltzburgh, in the words of Catharine of Sienna, gives the following character of the common clergy, at the beginning of the Reformation:—"The modern and unhappy clergy addict themselves to temporal things, being destitute of Divine light; they love themselves, neglect the love of God and their neighbour; they are worse than worldly men, whom they destroy together with themselves. They are addicted to pleasures and infamous practices, and neglect the salvation of the souls of Christ's faithful people. By the lives of such wicked clergymen, the seculars come to be disobedient and irreverent towards the church; they are seduced by blind guides, who, oh shame! are ignorant idiots, proud, covetous, hypocrites, simonaical, luxurious, envious, slow to good works, prone to evil, etc. Where at this day can be found that continence in gesture, diet, apparel, and laughter, that becomes the clergy? At banquets, taverns, plays, and theatres, they are more frequently found, than in places dedicated to God. How hugely pernicious to the universal church, the scurrility, ignorance, fornication, simony, and other crimes are, with which almost the whole clergy is infected, there is no man doubts." And Nicholas de Clemangis, who

was himself an archdeacon in the church of Rome, represents her clergy as the dregs and scum of mankind, as persons who abandoned themselves to the most loathsome vices. My author gives the passage without a translation, thinking it, I suppose, too bad to be expressed in modern English. I shall give only the concluding sentence:—"Crapulati vero et inebriati pugnant, clamant, tumultuantur, nomen Dei et sanctorum suorum pollutissimis labiis execrantur, sicque tandem compositi ex meretricum suarum amplexibus, ad Divinum altare veniunt."

Let us ascend the scale of ecclesiastical rank, and see if we find the state of morals any better; and I request the reader to remember that I am not citing the authority of *lying* Protestants; I am quoting the very words of great authors of the church of Rome, who surely would not represent their holy mother in a light more depraved than she really was. "The bishops," says the abovementioned bishop of Saltzburgh, "serve their own tables instead of the altar; they are unwise in Divine things, while they love the wisdom of the world; they are more employed in the offices of the exchequer than in the work of Christ; they adorn their bodies with gold, they defile their souls with impurity; they account it a shame to employ themselves in spiritual matters, and their glory is to meddle with those things that are scurrilous.

Hence it is said by Catharine of Sienna, They, as men that are blinded, reckon that to be their honour that is truly their shame; contrary to the canons, they keep about themselves pimps, bawds, flatterers, and buffoons; such as give themselves wholly to vanity, instead of men that are learned and of good report." "The bishops neglect due hospitality by neglecting the poor of Christ, by making themselves fat, by feeding dogs and other beasts, and so one beast feeds another, as if they chose to be of the number of those against whom the Lord will pronounce that just sentence, 'I was poor, and ye received me not, therefore depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' There are few bishops who are not covetous; they take by violence other men's goods, and wastefully spend the goods of the church; they bestow the revenues of the church not to pious uses, but upon their kindred, upon stageplayers, flatterers, huntsmen, whores, and such like persons; they rather make provision for the wickedness of men than for the necessities of nature."

This was a complaint against the bishops by one of their own body, who must have known them well, in the year 1519, when the Reformation by Luther had just begun; and, supposing the representation to be exaggerated tenfold, it exhibits enough to justify Luther, and all the others who abandoned the communion of a church so immersed in vice

and abominable filthiness, that it was scarcely possible to avoid pollution, or to have any communion with it but a fellowship in iniquity. That matters were little better forty years after, appears by the speech of the Duke of Bavaria's ambassador to the council of Trent, in which he tells the council that the cause of the evils that were risen among them was the bad life of the clergy, whose wickedness was so great, that he could not relate it without offending the chaste ears of his auditory.

The cardinals were still worse than the bishops. "If any man would make an image of pride," says Clemangis, "he can no way do it more to the life than by representing a cardinal to the eyes of the beholders." "The whole world complained of the pride and luxury of the cardinals." And can any man think there was not just cause for this complaint who will but consider what vast revenues were spent upon their lusts? "For not two, or three, or ten, or twenty, benefices would suffice; but a hundred or two hundred, yea, sometimes four or five hundred, or more, were usurped by one cardinal; and those not of the poorer sort, but the fattest and richest of all. And well had it been for the inferior clergy, had they been content with that prodigious number; but the great mischief was, that nothing could satisfy them; but how

great soever they had, they still more vehemently coveted more."

I should now ascend to the pope, and describe the *holiness* of him who impiously assumes to be HOLINESS itself; but as it would not be consistent with due reverence to thrust the "head of Catholic unity" into the tail of one of my schismatical PROTESTANTS, I must let "his holiness" wait till next week.

SECTION XVII.

DR. MILNER asserts that the church of Rome is distinguished by the "fruits of holiness;" that is, by the number of holy persons which she has produced; and, therefore, he concludes that she is the only true church. Though we were to grant his premises, the conclusion does not necessarily follow; for though he could prove that she produced ever so many millions of saints in former ages, if she be not producing saints at present, she is not a true, but an apostate church. There were, no doubt, many holy persons at one time in the seven churches in Asia; but when these churches embraced error in doctrine, and suffered immorality in practice among their members, the apostle John was divinely instructed to warn them, that unless they repented they would be cast off. When this judgment came upon them, they were

no longer true churches. They might continue to exist for ages under the name of Christian; but when Christ had removed his candlestick, and withdrawn his Spirit from them, they were no better than the dead skeleton of a once living body. That this is the present state of the church of Rome may be inferred from her own account of herself. She does not know, at least cannot be certain, that she has a single saint at this day in her communion; for no man or woman can be admitted into the rank of saints till a hundred years after death;* and it will depend upon the pope of a distant period, whether any of the present day shall be canonized, that is, put among the saints. This law, by which the *saint*-fication of her members is delayed for a hundred years, is one of the wisest and most modest things the church of Rome ever did; for she knows very well that if she were to call the average, or even the best of her members, saints while alive, the world would laugh at both her and them.

But the reader must be aware that I am taking a too favourable view of the church of Rome, when I speak only of her present state, and as if I admitted her holiness up to a late period; for she has been notoriously unholy for many hundred years. She is not

* I am not sure out there may be some alteration in this respect since the restoration of the pope, after his late humiliation.

the mere skeleton of a once living body, she is not like a collection of dry inoffensive bones; she is a putrid carcase, presenting to the moral sense all that is loathsome and abominable. This I established in my last section, by the testimony of her own authors, who wrote previous to, and about the period of, the Reformation, who tell us plainly that all ranks and degrees among them were corrupt beyond expression, especially the clergy, from the lowest curate up to the greatest cardinal. It remains now that I show what sort of men the popes were; and as these claimed to be the head and centre of all power, spiritual and temporal, they had usually concentrated in their own persons all the vices of the inferior members.

Papists have a saying among themselves, that Gregory the Great was the last of the good, and the first of the bad popes; by which they acknowledge that they have not had a good pope for twelve hundred years, which, I suppose, is the truth. We need not look back to the dark ages, in which their own historians tell us, they were "monsters and prodigies," (*hæc monstra, hæc portenta. Plat. in Vita Benedicti* IV.:) "and so void of piety, as neither to regard the person they sustained, nor the place they were in." (Sabellic. *Ennead.* 9, l. i.) Let us rather see what was their character about the time of the Reformation, when it might have been

expected that a regard for their own interest would have induced them at least to assume the appearance of virtue.

"When, after the death of Innocent VIII., Lionel, bishop of Concordia, in an oration to the cardinals, pressed them, with the most rousing arguments, to choose a good man whose life was without scandal; (Raynald, an. 1492;) what was the effect? Alexander VI. was chosen, a man, if he may be so called, who was the reproach of human nature; who, before he was chosen pope, was a prodigy of lust and other vices, and continued to be so to the last; when, by the just judgment of God, he was poisoned, by a mistake in drinking that cup himself which he had prepared to despatch others." *See Preservative against Popery*, tit i. p. 32, with the authorities.

"Paul III. lived not long enough to let the world know what he would prove, for he died within six and twenty days after his election." *Ibid.*

"Julius II., who succeeded him, was guilty of crimes so notorious as to be a scandal to the whole church. He filled Italy with rapine, war, and blood; to which he was so addicted, that, contrary to the law of nations, he commanded the procurator of the duke of Savoy to be tortured, because he endeavoured to persuade him to peace. So monstrous were his acts, that Richerius says he must be

wholly made of steel who can read them without horror." *Ibid.*

"Pope Leo x., in whose time the Reformation began, was a civil, debonair gentleman; but so little concerned for religion, that he cared not to know what it meant. When he admitted discourses of that nature, it was for the sake of diversion, and to make himself sport. His soul, he thought, was no longer lived than his body, and therefore he gave himself up to sensual gratifications; and it was but reason, that he, who supposed he should die like a beast, should live like an epicure." *Ibid.*

"Clement vii., as he got the popedom by simony, so he administered it by as ill arts as he got it. His prime virtue was dissimulation. He made no conscience of his word or oath, but broke his covenants as oft as he made them." *Ibid.*

"Paul iii. and Julius iii. followed next. The characters given of them by many of the Romish writers are so foul and loathsome, that if I had the face to write them, no modest man would read them without blushing." *Ibid.*

Such was the monstrous wickedness of th *holy* church, in the head and all her members, about this time, that the world itself, depraved as it is, could bear it no longer, but cried for deliverance. The court of Rome

was beset by complaints and remonstrances by the emperor and other sovereign princes, in which they demanded a correction of those abuses which they and their subjects felt to be intolerable. In short, they called for reformation, which the pope was extremely unwilling to grant; but which he durst not peremptorily refuse, lest the nations and their princes should reform themselves, as some of them had already done. His *holiness* promised, and shuffled, and temporised for many years: but at last consented to the calling of a council at Trent, the professed object of which was, to satisfy those who were demanding reformation: but which, instead of reforming abuses, rather confirmed them, and established by law many errors, which had been only tacitly admitted before. Before the pope would consent to call such a council, he tried many expedients to silence the universal clamour that was raised against the corruptions of the church. He once and again made a feint as if he would set seriously about reformation himself; and Paul III. went so far as to appoint four cardinals and five other prelates to draw up a catalogue of grievances and abuses which needed reformation, to make the world believe that he was going to reform. These prelates drew up a paper under the title of "The Advice given to Pope Paul III. by Four Cardinals and Five other Prelates, whose Names are underwritten,

in order to the Amendment of the State of the Church." Among the names subscribed to this document, we find Cardinal John Peter Caraffa, afterwards Pope Paul IV., and Reginald Pole, cardinal of England, men who were not likely to give an exaggerated representation of the evil state of their own church. Of the document itself, Dr. Clagget gave a translation, which may be seen in the "Preservative against Popery," vol. i. tit. i. It occupies six large folio pages, closely printed; and it makes such a disclosure of notorious corruption, and worse than heathen abomination, prevailing through the whole church, from the head down to the lowest members, that it is astonishing that any man who has any respect for his own character, should acknowledge his connexion with it, and that he should not with indignation renounce the communion and the name of a church which pollutes the very earth more than the cities did, which God destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven.

The principal abuses which are here brought to the view of "his holiness" exhibit the greatest degree of wickedness of which human nature is capable; that is, selling and bartering the souls of men for livings to the priests. "Another abuse," say the advisers, "of a most grievous nature, is the collation of ecclesiastical benefices, especially with cure of souls, and, above all,

of bishoprics; the manner having been, that *good provision is made for those having the benefices; but for the flock of Christ and the church, none at all.*"—"There is another abuse also in the changing of benefices, upon contracts that are all of them *simoniacal*, in which *no regard is had to anything but gain.*"—And so on throughout the whole paper, the church of Rome stands confessed, the antichrist, that makes merchandise of men's souls; for that which so many of her own dignitaries, including one who was afterwards pope, have so solemnly declared to be true, may be considered as virtually the admission of the church herself. By this document alone the Reformation is fully vindicated; and I am surprised that it has not been oftener published, and more generally known; for as a defence of the Reformation, it renders any other publication unnecessary.

What, for instance, can be a more complete vindication of Henry VIII.th's suppression of monasteries, and John Knox's preaching them down, than the following: "In the orders of the *religious*, there is another abuse to be corrected, that many of them are so degenerate, that they are grown scandalous and their examples pernicious to the *seculars* We think the conventual orders are (*i. e* ought) to be abolished, not by doing any man that injury of dispossessing him, but by forbidding them to admit any more. For thus,

without wronging any one, they would soon be worn out, and good *religious* might be substituted instead of them; but at present it were best that all children who are not yet professed should be taken from the monasteries." They did not wish to abolish the *religious* or monastic life altogether; but their words plainly imply that the monasteries, as they then were, ought to be suppressed. Again, say these advisers of his holiness:—"Christian people are disturbed by another abuse, which concerns *nuns* that are under the care of the conventual *friars;* where, in most monasteries, public sacrileges are committed, to the intolerable scandal of the citizens." Here, under the modest expression, *sacrilege*, the illicit intercourse between the friars and nuns is explicitly admitted, "to the intolerable scandal of the citizens."

I shall quote a few sentences from the conclusion of this official paper, in order to show that the pope's advisers were perfectly acquainted with the state of morals, as well as of discipline, in their *holy* church:—"Thus, according to our capacity, having summarily described all those things which belong to the duty of a supreme bishop of the Catholic church, it remains that we say something of that which belongs to the *Roman* bishop. This city of Rome is both the *mother* of the church, and the *mistress* of other churches; wherefore the worship of God and purity of

manners should flourish there most of all: but yet, holy father, all strangers are scandalized when they go into St. Peter's church, and see what slovenly, ignorant priests say mass there, so habited and clothed, that they could not appear cleanly in a nasty house. This is so mighty an offence to all, that the most reverend the archpresbyter and the penitentiary are to take care of this thing, and remove the scandal; and the like order is to be taken in other churches.

"Nay, in this city, whores walk about, as if they were goodly matrons, or they ride upon mules, and are at noonday followed up and down by men of the best account in the families of cardinals, and by clergymen. We see no such degeneracy in any other city, but in this which is to be an example to all others. These whores live in splendid houses: 'tis a filthy abuse, and ought to be mended.

"Now, these are the things, most holy father, which we for the present have brought together, as our capacity would permit, that, as to us it seems needful, they may be corrected. But you, in your goodness and wisdom, will make a more perfect judgment of every thing. We indeed, though we have not answered the greatness of the concern, which is too hard for us, yet at least have satisfied our own consciences, and cannot but conceive great hope that under your government we may see the church of God purged,

fair as a dove, at harmony with itself, and united into one body, to the never-dying honour of your name. You have taken to yourself the name of Paul; we hope you will imitate the charity of Paul, who was a chosen vessel to carry the name of Christ among the Gentiles. We hope that you are chosen to restore the name of Christ, forgotten by the nations, *and even by us the clergy*, that hereafter it may live in our hearts, and appear in our actions, to heal our diseases, to reduce the flock of Christ to one sheepfold, to remove from us that indignation and vengeance of God, which we deserve, which is now ready to fall upon us, which now hangs over our heads."

It did not occur to these great prelates, that they were hurting their own cause when they called the city of Rome the mother of the church; for if they mean Christian Rome, it is making the church her own mother, or admitting that Christianity existed before the church of Rome, which would be to deny her primacy. If they mean Pagan Rome, they concede to Protestants the heathen origin of their church; and then we need not be surprised to find the daughter so like the mother, or that she has greatly surpassed her in wickedness, as often happens.

The proposed reformation came to nothing. As Dr. Clagget says in his preface: "The trick was to make the Christian princes

believe, that he that required and they who gave this advice were in good earnest; and so it was sent into Germany, where it produced quite other effects than were hoped for; for all men's mouths were opened against the court (of Rome) more than they were before. And the court soon showed that this solemn advice was but mere artifice and collusion, to amuse the world, and keep off the much dreaded council as long as it was possible;" and when Cardinal Caraffa came to be pope, eighteen years after, he showed no disposition to make one step in that reform which he had joined in recommending to his predecessor. All this tended to convince the Reformers that it was vain to expect the church of Rome would ever mend her manners, and that they had done right in endeavouring to reform themselves.

I request the reader again to remember, that all my proofs of the unholiness of the boasted and boasting "*holy* Catholic church," both in the head and the members, are drawn from writers high in authority in that very church. Out of the mouth of her own children she stands condemned; and surely these children knew her well. Protestant writers cannot say a word on this subject, but they are accused of misrepresenting and calumniating the "Catholic church." To this incessantly reiterated charge Dr. Sherlock has furnished a sufficient answer, part of which I

shall here present to the reader. I quote as I find it prefixed to the "English Reformation and Papal Schism," by the bishop of St. David's.

"As to the probability of this charge, (misrepresenting.) Now, 1. Ask them whether the first Reformers charged the church of Rome with such doctrines and practices as they were not guilty of? We have not, that I know of, increased our charge against the church of Rome in this age; if there has been any difference, we have rather been more favourable and candid in our censures of some of their doctrines, than the first Reformers were. Now, is it likely that the first Reformers should charge the church of Rome wrongfully? No man can be a misrepresenter, but either out of ignorance or design; which of these can we, with any probability, charge the Reformers with?

"As for ignorance, is it a probable thing that Luther, Melancthon, Oecolampadius, Zuinglius, Bucer, Calvin, or, to come to our own English Reformers, that Archbishop Cranmer, and others, who had all been Papists themselves, should be ignorant what was taught and practised in the church of Rome? It is now thought, in this very cause, a very considerable proof that Protestants do misrepresent Papists, because some Papists deny such doctrines and practices as Protestants charge them with; and, say they, can you

think that Papists do not understand their own religion better than Protestants do? Now, though this may be made a question, (and I am very apt to think that, compare the learned and unlearned Protestants and Papists together, there are more Protestants than Papists who understand Popery; and not only experience verifies this, but there is a plain reason why it should be so; because it is the principle of Protestants that they must neither believe nor disbelieve any thing without understanding it; but an implicit faith in the church governs the unlearned Papists, and many of those who should be learned too; but let that be as it will,) this argument signifies nothing to our first Reformers; for if Papists may be presumed to understand their own religion, the first Reformers, who were all educated in Popery, might be as well presumed to understand what Popery then was; and therefore there can be no reason to suspect that they misrepresented Popery out of ignorance.

"Nor is it more probable that they should misrepresent Popery out of interest and design; for if they were conscious to themselves that Popery was not so bad as they represent it to be, why should they themselves have set up for Reformers? and what hope could they have, that, at that time, when Popery was so well known, they should persuade the world to believe their misrepresentations?

"Was it so desirable a thing for men to bring all the powers of the church of Rome upon themselves, merely to gratify a misrepresenting humour? Do these men remember what our Reformers suffered for opposing Popery? The loss of their estates, their liberties, their lives, all the vengeance of a blind and enraged zeal. And did they undergo all this with such constancy and Christian patience, only for the sake of telling lies, and raising scandalous reports of the church of Rome? We think it a very good argument, that the apostles and first preachers of Christianity were honest men, and had no design to cheat the world, because they served no worldly interest by it, but cheerfully exposed themselves to all manner of sufferings in preaching the gospel; and why does not the same argument prove our first Reformers to be honest men, and then they could not be wilful misrepresenters?

"Nay, if we will but allow them to have been cunning men, (and it is evident they did not want wit,) they would never have undertaken so hopeless a design as to run down Popery merely by misrepresenting it; when, had their exceptions against Popery been only misrepresentations of their own, all the world could have confuted them. Had the first Reformers been only misrepresenters, can we think that they could have imposed upon such vast numbers of men, learned and

unlearned, who knew and saw what Popery was? They were no fools themselves, and therefore could not hope to impose such a cheat upon the world.

"2. Ask them again, how old this complaint is of Protestants misrepresenting Popery? how long it has been discovered that Popery is thus abused and misrepresented? Were the first Reformers charged with these misrepresentations by their adversaries in those days?" etc., etc.

The learned author proceeds to put a series of interrogatories, to which the only answer, consistent with truth, must be, that the first Reformers were not so accused of misrepresenting. They knew from personal observation and experience the truth of their accusations of the church of Rome; the church of Rome herself knew the truth of them, and all the world knew it. The church did not then affect to deny them, or to accuse the Reformers of misrepresenting; she rather admitted, and defended, or at least palliated, what was laid to her charge.

This reasoning is cogent and unanswerable, as a defence of the Reformers against the charge of misrepresenting and calumniating the church of Rome. But, with regard to the point in hand, we have little use for such arguments; for, as I have said again and again, the monstrous corruptions of this church are admitted, asserted, dilated upon,

and deplored, by her own authors, in language more strong than that which the Reformers used. We might, therefore, lay aside the writings of the latter altogether, and, by those of the former alone, we can demonstrate that the church of Rome does not possess those fruits of holiness of which Dr. Milner boasts, and that, therefore, she does not possess this mark of the true church.

SECTION XVIII.

I AM now arrived at what Dr. Milner calls the "Divine attestation" of the "sanctity" of the church of Rome. By this we are to understand the miracles which, in all ages, have been performed by the saints, and which are as illustrious in the present age, as they were in that of the apostles. Not that there are any living saints remarkable for miraculous powers, for he does not venture to tell us where so much as one is to be found alive who can do the slightest miracle; but he gives us very pompous descriptions of miraculous cures performed by St. Winefride at her holy well in Wales, within the last twenty years; and one case of an incurable disease having been cured by a touch of the hand of a priest who was hanged in the reign of Charles I., one of whose hands, it seems, is preserved in Lancashire, for the purpose of working miracles; and, if we can

believe Dr. Milner, this dead hand is more powerful than a thousand living ones.

We have a great deal of unnecessary discussion about the miracles performed by Christ and his apostles. I say unnecessary discussion, because Protestants do not call in question the reality of divinely attested miracles, in either the Old or the New Testament. Dr. Milner, however, argues for the reality of the miracles performed by the apostles, apparently for no other purpose, than to make it appear that the church of Rome has the power of working miracles; and, of course, he wishes us to believe that the apostles were clergymen and saints of the Romish church. I believe some authors have conceded a great deal too much with regard to the miraculous powers alleged to have been possessed by some distinguished Christians after the apostolic age. For my part, I am determined to keep by my fundamental principle of the Bible alone. I do not say that no miracles were ever performed but what are recorded in the Bible; but I do say, that I do not believe in any which are not recorded there; and I acknowledge no authority that requires me to believe in any other.

Through many tiresome pages, Dr. Milner connects a chain of miracles, from the first century down to the Reformation, in which chain, one St. Bernard appears a link of

great magnitude and lustre. After the Reformation, a saint arose who outstripped all who had gone before him. Of this saint Dr. Milner thus writes:—"The miracles of St. Francis Xaverius, the apostle of India, who was contemporary with Luther, in number, splendour, and publicity, may vie with St. Bernard's. They consisted in foretelling future events, speaking unknown languages, calming tempests at sea, curing various maladies, and raising the dead to life; and though they took place in remote countries, yet they were verified in the same, soon after the saint's death, by virtue of a commission from John III., king of Portugal, and were generally acknowledged, not only by Europeans of different religions in India, but also by the native Mohammedans and Pagans."—*Letter* xxiii., *pp.* 80, 81.

"It is painful to think," says Mr. Grier, "that in the present enlightened age, a gentleman like Dr. Milner, who displays learning in almost every department of science; who possesses experience, intelligence, and taste; who writes well, and who reasons acutely—should be so besotted, as not only to believe himself, but to attempt to induce others to believe, all the stupid legends of the dark ages, and the modern fabrications of the same stamp. Such fatuity would be a miracle in itself, were it not known how superstition debases the reason, when it has

gained the ascendant over the mind."—*Reply to Dr. Milner's End of Controversy, p.* 361.

"As to Xavier," says the same writer, "it might have been expected that the doctor would have been more reserved in ascribing miraculous powers to one, who lived so much nearer our own times, than to those of more distant ages: because, the means of detecting imposture are more within our reach, in the former than in the latter case; and because, if he found that recourse had been had to fabrication with respect to accounts of modern date, it sinks into disrepute those of earlier origin.

"Of Xavier's miracles, which, Dr. Milner says, 'consisted in foretelling future events, speaking unknown languages, calming tempests at sea, and *raising the dead to life*,' Acosta, a contemporary writer, a Jesuit, and a missionary also, makes no mention. But had these singular occurrences taken place, he must have noticed them. And, with respect to the gift of tongues, which is ascribed to him in a supernatural degree, it is certain that he himself deeply lamented, in one of his letters, his deficiency in this very particular! Now, where he wanted a requisite which would have been so essential to the cause of proselytism among the Pagans, it is highly improbable that his saintship would have been invested with any other. Indeed, his simple acknowledgment on this one point

throws discredit on the other miraculous stories told of him. But Dr. Milner adds, that Xavier's miracles 'were *verified* soon after the saint's death by virtue of a commission from John III., king of Portugal.' Here again the silence of Acosta about those alleged miracles meets him; and not only this, but the express assertion of this writer that *no* miracles whatever were performed in India. And, as Acosta's account was not published for nearly forty years after Xavier's death, it is evident that that space of time, at least, elapsed before his miracles were thought of. This is Bishop Douglas' opinion on the subject;* and though Dr. Milner attempts to invalidate it by a reference to Acosta's work, yet the very place† referred to establishes its correctness. That writer barely

* "See CRITERION of Miracles, p. 84. Dr. Buchanan tells of his having observed to the Archbishop of Goa, that 'Xavier was an eminently great man; but that what others have written *for him* and *of him*, tarnished his fame, by making him the inventor of fables. To which the chief inquisitor candidly signified his assent.' *See Christian Researches*, p. 162. This anecdote is the more valuable, both as it records the admission of a Popish ecclesiastic of high rank, resident on the very theatre of Xavier's ministry, and consequently acquainted with every act of his; and as it exhibits the hollow pretensions set up for this saint by Dr. Milner, on the score of miraculous agency."

† .... "'quod miraculorum *nulla* facultas sit, quæ apostoli plurima perpetrârunt.'—*De Procur.*, etc. l. ii. cap. 8. Here Acosta *denies* that the missionaries had ANY power; but Dr. Milner's gloss is, 'that they only had not the *same facility* as the apostles.' FACULTAS—*facility*, secundum Milner! *See Letter* XXIV."

says that 'great *signs were reported* of Xavier by numerous and credible witnesses.' But Dr. Milner goes farther, since he says that they not only 'vie in number, splendour, and publicity with the miracles of St. Bernard;' but appear to equal those of our Saviour himself!!"—*Reply, etc., pp.* 367—369.

About a year or two ago, I read as much of St. Francis Xavier's life and miracles as disgust and contempt would allow me. I give one miracle as a sample of the whole. I write from memory, as I am not now in possession of the book:—The holy saint had a consecrated crucifix, which he valued above all things in the world. On a sea voyage, one day, he lost it overboard; and was quite inconsolable. After landing at the country whither he went, and walking on the sea shore, he saw his favourite image coming towards him, elevated above the surface of the water. Gazing with astonishment and delight, and going to the water's edge, it was most reverently laid down at his feet, by a crab, who had borne it in its claws through the ocean, to the very spot where the saint was miraculously brought at the time to receive it.

This is gravely related as one of the miracles of St. Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies. But it appears to me that he had no hand in it whatever; and did not so much as expect anything of the kind to happen.

The crab is entitled to the whole credit of this miracle; and I would have advised the pope, at his next diet of canonization, to have put this animal among the saints, had he not been anticipated by the heathen Egyptians or Chaldeans, who gave him a place among the constellations, where, under his Latin name, Cancer, he has the honour of marking the extremity of the sun's northern declination.

But the gross wickedness of such a story as the above consists chiefly in the idolatry that it implies and cherishes. It is evidently meant to be inculcated, that there was a divinity in the holy image which the saint worshipped, that could inspire the crab with the thought of its preservation, and restoration to its devout worshipper: and those who believe the story are confirmed in their idolatrous practices; for that Papists, even those who live among us, do worship such things, is beyond all doubt, though they deny, or wish to conceal it. Of this I have the evidence of one of their own communion, who lately called on me, being introduced by a friend, for the purpose of becoming acquainted with one who had made himself so notorious by his opposition to the "Catholic Church." He had read part at least of my work, with great care, and had many passages marked, which he wished to converse with me about. I talked fully an hour with him; and showed

him several Popish books which he had never seen, and some sentiments in them which surprised him, of which he requested, and obtained, written extracts. Turning over Dr. Milner's work, I pointed to the crucifix, or figure of the crucifixion, at the root of his apostolical tree, and asked him to tell me candidly,—"Do you really worship a thing like that?"—"*They do it*," said he, "but *I* always felt an aversion to it."

With regard to home, and more recent miracles, Dr. Milner thus addresses his correspondents: "Methinks I hear some of your society thus asking me: 'Do you then pretend that your church possesses the miraculous powers at the present day?' I answer, that the church never possessed miraculous powers, in the sense of most Protestant writers, so as to be able to effect cures or other supernatural events at her mere pleasure: for even the apostles could not do this; as we learn from the history of the lunatic child, Matt. xvii. 16. But this I say, that the Catholic church, being always the beloved spouse of Christ, Rev. xxi. 9, and continuing at all times to bring forth children of heroical sanctity, God fails not in this, any more than in past ages, to illustrate her and them by unquestionable miracles. Accordingly, in those processes which are constantly going on, at the apostolic see, for the canonization of new saints, fresh miracles, of

a recent date, continue to be proved with the highest degree of evidence, as I can testify, from having perused, on the spot, the official printed account of some of them. For the further satisfaction of your friends, I will inform them that I had satisfactory proof, that the astonishing catastrophe of Louis XVI. and his queen, in being beheaded on a scaffold, was foretold by a nun of Fougeres, Sœur Nativité, twenty years before it happened; and that the banishment of the French clergy from their country, long before it happened, was predicted by the holy French pilgrim, Benedict Labre, whose miracles caused the conversion of the late Rev. Mr. Thayer, an American clergyman, who, being at Rome, witnessed several of them. With respect to miraculous cures of a late date, I have the most respectable attestation of several of them, and I am well acquainted with four or five persons who have experienced them. The following facts are respectively attested, but at much greater length, by the Rev. Thomas Sadler, of Trafford, near Manchester, and the Rev. J. Crathorne, of Garswood, near Wigan:—Joseph Lamb, of Eccles, near Manchester, now twenty-eight years of age, on the 12th of August, 1814, fell from a hay-rick, four yards and a half high, by which accident it was conceived the spine of his back was broken. Certain it is, he could neither walk nor stand without

crutches, down to the 2d of October, and that he described himself as feeling the most exquisite pain in the back. On that day, having prevailed with much difficulty upon his father, who was then a Protestant, to take him in a cart, with his wife and two friends, Thomas Cutler and Eliz. Dooley, to Garswood, near Wigan, where the hand of F. Arrowsmith,* one of the Catholic priests who suffered death at Lancaster, for the exercise of his religion, in the reign of Charles I., is preserved, and has often caused wonderful cures; he got himself conveyed to the altar rails of the chapel, and there to be signed, on his back, with the sign of the cross, by that hand; when, feeling a particular sensation and total change in himself, as he expressed it, he exclaimed to his wife, 'Mary, I can walk!' This he did, without any help whatever, walking first into an adjoining room, and thence to the cart which conveyed him home. With his debility, his pains also left him, and his back has continued well ever since. (August 6th, 1817.) These particulars the above-named persons, all still living, are ready, as they were respectively witnesses of them, to declare upon oath. I have attestations of incurable cancers and other disorders being suddenly remedied

* I cannot find any account of this *saint* and *martyr*, in either the Protestant or Popish histories of that period, to which I have access: from which we may infer that his saintship was not then acknowledged.

by the same instrument of God's bounty: but it would be a tedious work to transcribe them, or the other attestations in my possession of a similar nature."—*Letter* xxiii., *pp.* 87—89.

I have inserted this story at full length, though it occupies more space than it deserves, in order to show with what a face of brass Papists can gravely relate their "lying wonders;" and how they impose upon the poor credulous dupes of their deceit and cunning.

I need not say that I disbelieve this story; for I suppose none but a Papist can believe it to be anything but a gross imposition. It has not so much as a feature of credibility in it; and the only thing wonderful about it is, that it should be believed by any person capable of distinguishing his right hand from his left. This Joseph Lamb fell from a hayrick, "by which accident it *was conceived* the spine of his back was broken;" but no means were used, so far as appears, to ascertain the fact. There was no surgeon called to certify the fracture, or the state of the body before or after the alleged cure. There are no witnesses of either the disease or the remedy, but persons interested in propagating a belief in the virtue of the wonder-working dead hand, except the father of Lamb, who was then a Protestant, but whose conversion to Popery was the consequence of

the supposed miracle. This lets us into the secret of the matter. It was easy for the son to feign both the disease and the cure, for such a good purpose as the conversion of his father; and the priests, no doubt in the secret, knew how to do the work with becoming solemnity. Such tricks have been so common in the church of Rome, that they would have lost all interest and effect long ago, but for the besotted ignorance and stupidity of the people, who submit both conscience and understanding to their ghostly guides. I request the reader to turn to my first volume, page 391, and he will find an account of a young man, trained, almost from his infancy, to counterfeit blindness, for the express purpose of making him the subject of a miracle at some convenient time; which must have been a much more difficult affair than that of Lamb feigning himself lame only from August till October.

Dr. Milner gives us the particulars of two other cases of miraculous cures performed by St. Wenefride, at her holy well. One of them is narrated in a letter to himself, dated November 19th, 1809, by a Miss Maria Hornyold. Some writers have endeavoured to account for these cures from the effects of the cold bath; but I see no necessity of accounting for them at all; for I believe they are nothing more than the effects of deceiving and being deceived. There are

impostors among common beggars who can assume the appearance of almost any disease; and the wily priests know well how to make use of this art for impressing the belief of miraculous cures.

When the apostles of Christ went preaching the gospel, God was pleased to confirm their testimony, by "signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost." But when the truth of their testimony was confirmed, and received by the churches, in the apostolic writings, the truth was then left to make its way by its own evidence, with the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, which Christ promised should remain with his disciples for ever: and to suppose that miracles are still necessary, is to say that the truth of the gospel is not yet sufficiently confirmed. What is it that Papists propose to establish by their miracles? Is it that Jesus is the Christ? This was the design of Christ's own miracles. Is it to prove that the apostles of Christ were his messengers, and spoke by his authority? This was the design of their miracles; this is what was established by them; and having this established, we have no more to ask for,—we have nothing to do but to receive their testimony, and obey what they commanded. This renders further miraculous interference quite unnecessary: and as God does nothing in vain, miracles must of course have ceased

when the canon of Divine revelation was closed: and persons who understand and believe what is written, will not look for new miracles, any more than for a new revelation.

But I return to the question, What is it that Papists propose to establish by their miracles? It is what we know from the word of God to be erroneous, superstitious, and idolatrous; such as, that there is a Divine virtue in certain images, in the relics of certain saints, as in the withered hand of Father Arrowsmith, and in the holy water of St. Wenefride's well; and all this for the purpose of cherishing devotion, and religious worship to saints and images. This we know to be contrary to the word of God; we are sure no real miracle can be wrought to establish such impiety; and therefore what is pretended must be false; and we ought not to believe such things, even though supported by what has the appearance of a miracle. The children of Israel were instructed by Moses that false prophets would arise among them; but they were commanded to beware of them; and not to believe any man who would tempt them to idolatry, though they did miraculous things, or what appeared to be such. See Deut. xiii. 1—18. In reference to this, the apostle Peter gives us warning of what should take place in the last days: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be

false teachers among you."—"And through covetousness shall they make merchandise of you." 2 Pet. ii. 1—3. This prediction, and the history of the church of Rome, will be found to agree in every particular. The mystery of iniquity, as described by the apostle Paul, was to come, "after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," 2 Thess. ii. 8—10. And the church of Rome has proved herself to be this mystery of iniquity, by her thousands of pretended miracles, by which she deceives the world.*

After all, Dr. Milner, in narrating what he calls miracles, intends to prove merely that his church is *holy*. He calls them the Divine attestations of her sanctity. Now, I do not recollect that any of the miracles recorded in Scripture were wrought for such a purpose. If persons, or churches, are really holy, they can make this appear without a miracle; and I would most seriously suspect the character of any church that told me, it required a miracle to prove that they were holy. Genuine holiness, like the sun in the firmament, makes itself manifest by its own light. All men can observe and mark those who are humble, and self-denying, and benevolent;

* [It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader, that the preceding remarks are applicable to many other false and lying miracles of the church of Rome, said to have taken place since the above was printed.—Ed.]

and who are living soberly and righteously in the world. It requires no miracle to prove that these are holy persons; but Dr. Milner, perfectly aware that his church cannot bear to be tried by this standard, pleads to have her holiness proved by miracles!

I conclude this section, and this subject, with the following curious statement by Dr. Milner, by which the reader will see that there is an office in Rome, for recording and trying miracles:—"In the first place, then, a judicial examination of each reported miracle must be made in the place where it is said to have happened, and the depositions of the several witnesses must be given upon oath; this examination is generally repeated two or three different times at intervals. In the next place, the examiners at Rome are unquestionably men of character, talents, and learning, who, nevertheless, are not permitted to pronounce upon any cure or other effect in nature, till they have received a regular report of physicians and other naturalists upon it. So far from being precipitate, it employs them whole years to come to a decision, on a few cases, respecting each saint; this is printed and handed about among indifferent persons, previously to its being laid before the pope. In short, so strict is the examination, that, according to an Italian proverb,—'It is next to a miracle to get a miracle proved at Rome' It is

reported by F. Daubenton, that an English Protestant gentleman, meeting, in that city, with a process of forty miracles, which had been laid before the congregation of rites, to which the examination of them belonged, was so well satisfied with the respective proofs of them, as to express a wish that Rome would never allow of any miracles but such as were as strongly proved as these appeared to be; when, to his great surprise, he was informed that every one of these had been rejected by Rome, as not sufficiently proved."—*Letter* xxiv. *p.* 92.

SECTION XIX.

Dr. Milner introduces the subject of his third mark of the true church, that is, CATHOLICITY, in the following whining and canting manner:—"In treating of this third mark of the true church, as expressed in our common creed, I feel my spirits sink within me, and I am almost tempted to throw away my pen, in despair. For what chance is there of opening the eyes of candid Protestants to the other marks of the church, if they are capable of keeping them shut to this? Every time that each of them addresses the God of truth, either in solemn worship or in private devotion, he fails not to repeat, *I believe in* THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: and yet if I ask him the question, *Are you a* CATHOLIC?

he is sure to answer me, *No, I am a* PROTESTANT!—Was there ever a more glaring instance of inconsistency and self-condemnation among rational beings?"—*Letter* XXV. p. 103.

I have often remarked that Popish authors make use of the strongest words, when their facts and arguments are the weakest. Here Dr. Milner expresses his unutterable astonishment at our Protestant stupidity; and almost throws himself into a fit of hysterics, and his pen into the fire, because, while we profess to believe in the Catholic church, we do not believe it to be the church of Rome. This is all Jesuitical artifice, intended to confirm the men of his own communion in their blind adherence to their bigoted superstition; for he knows very well, that when we use the word *catholic*, we do it in a sense quite consistent with our being Protestants; and that so far from conceding the word to the church of Rome as exclusively hers, we positively deny that she has any title to it. This he must know, if he has read any of the standard works in defence of the Reformation; and yet he writes as if he did not know it.

The word CATHOLIC is very harmless, as understood by Protestants, of the church of the first-born who are written in heaven, of all kindreds, and tongues, and people, and nations. But as it is nowhere in Scripture

used to designate the true church on earth, I think the Protestant cause would suffer no loss by having it expunged from both our creed and our vocabulary. Dr. Milner himself admits the fact, which every theologian and church historian knows, that this word was not originally in that short summary of belief, called the Apostles' Creed, but foisted in afterwards to serve a purpose. But though it were otherwise, I would reckon it of no importance, seeing it has not the sanction of any of those who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and this being the case, be the meaning of the word what it may, it can be of no use in ascertaining which is the true church. Dr. Milner's third MARK, therefore, is no mark at all.

In different parts of my work, however, I have condescended to argue as if it were; and have shown that it does not, and never did, belong to the church of Rome. I need not again discuss the general question; but shall confine myself now to a few remarks on what Dr. Milner has advanced under it.

He finds, it seems, that a Protestant cannot perform an act of devotion, public or private, without repeating his belief in the Catholic church, which indicates the most deplorable ignorance of Protestant worship; and it, at the same time, gives us to understand what Papists understand religious worship to be; that is, a mere mechanical process, or repe-

tition of the Apostles' Creed, with perhaps the ten commandments. Now, I believe there are thousands of Protestants who do not question an article of the creed; but who yet never think of it in their devotions. It is enough for them to believe the Divine record concerning Jesus Christ, as the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, by whom alone they can come to the Father; to be convinced of their own necessities; and of the grace of God ready to supply them for Christ's sake; and therefore, in his name, to come to the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy and find grace to help them. This, together with thanksgiving for mercy received, constitutes the devotion of a true Protestant; and it has no connexion at all with the public or private recitation of a creed: but I suppose a Papist cannot understand this.

The following is a sort of crowning argument, intended to prove that the church of Rome is catholic, and therefore the true church:—"If any stranger in London, Edinburgh, or Amsterdam, were to ask his way to the *Catholic chapel*, I would risk my life for it that no sober Protestant inhabitant would direct him to any other place of worship than ours." *Letter* xxv. p. 106. I am not accustomed to risk my life for such a trifle, but I will venture to assure Dr. Milner, that if any stranger in Glasgow, or even London, were

to ask his way to the *Popish* chapel, he would be directed to no other place of worship than his, or that of his Romish brethren; from which it is *demonstrated* that their religion is Popery, and nothing else. Nay, I will descend a great deal lower, and tell Dr. Milner, that if any stranger in Glasgow were to ask for Mr. Scott's chapel, he would be shown to no other than his; by which it is demonstrated that the *Scottish* is the only true church. I do not mean the church of *Scotland*, but the church of *Scott*, which is thus clearly proved, according to Dr. Milner's logic, to be *the church* in preference of every other!

Speaking of the church of England, he says, "With respect to this very church, nothing would be more inconsistent than to ascribe the greater part of the population of our two islands to it. For if the Irish Catholics, the Scotch Presbyterians, the English Methodists, and other dissenters, together with the vast population who neither are, nor profess to be, of any religion at all, are subtracted, to what a comparatively small number would the church of England be reduced! And how utterly absurd would it be for her to pretend to be the Catholic church! Nor are these the only subtractions to be made from her number, and indeed from those of all other Christian societies, divided from the true church; since, there being but

one baptism, all the young children who have been baptized in them, and all invincibly ignorant Christians, who exteriorly adhere to them, really belong to the Catholic church, as I have shown above." *Letter* xxv. p. 112.

I have quoted this, merely to show that Dr. Milner claims for the church of Rome all the dissenters' children in the three kingdoms, except those of my Baptist friends, who, if the claim were to be sustained, would have a greater advantage from their being *unchristened*, than their parents are aware of; that is, the advantage of not being claimed by the church of Rome, which is no small one, to those who consider that church as the Babylon that is to be destroyed. As for all the invincibly *ignorant Christians*, who are also claimed by Dr. Milner as members of his church, he is perfectly welcome to them. Let him take them, and make the most he can of them. In their separation, the Protestant churches will obtain a great deliverance.

Let us attend to one argument more which Dr. Milner adduces to prove the CATHOLICITY of his church:—"That the church in communion with the see of Rome is the original, as well as the most numerous church, is evident in several points of view. The stone cries out of the wall, as the prophet expresses it, (Hab. ii. 11,) in testimony of this, I mean that our venerable cathedrals and other stone churches, built by Catholic hands

and for Catholic worship, so as to resist, in some sort, that which is now performed in them, proclaim that ours is the ancient and original church." *Ibid.* p. 114. Dr. Milner does not know, I suppose, that this argument would have much more weight in the mouth of a heathen. The Pagan temples in different parts of the world, for instance the Pantheon at Rome, are much older than any Popish cathedral. The stones of their walls cry that theirs is the most ancient religion, and I leave Dr. Milner to answer them if he can.

As for the Popish cathedrals in Scotland, I believe there is just one remaining entire, that of Glasgow; and I can assure Dr. Milner that, so far from resisting the Protestant doctrine, or lifting up its voice in favour of Popery, there is not a church, or meeting-house, or conventicle-house, of any name, in the three kingdoms, in which, during the memory of man, the genuine Protestant doctrine has been more faithfully preached; and, so far as I can learn, the stones of the wall, chill and damp as they are, never gave the preacher any disturbance. And, though the ashes of St. Kentigern, and I do not know how many Popish saints, are lying there, not one of them has moved a tongue or a finger "to resist," in any sort, "that which is now performed" by the Protestant worshippers. I believe, however, none of these saints were hanged for treasonable practices; they were

not in this sense martyrs for their religion, and, therefore, it may be, that their relics cannot perform such wonders as the withered hand of Father Arrowsmith, as recorded in my last section.

Dr. Milner next proceeds to prove the church of Rome to be the true church from her APOSTOLICITY. My readers will perhaps not understand the meaning of this word; and I question if they will find it in any English dictionary. It is, however, so nearly allied to *apostolical*, that it either does, or ought to mean, that the church which pretends to this character ought to be, in every respect, such a church as the apostles planted in Jerusalem, and in other places. Jerusalem, we all know, was the mother church. In her was fulfilled the ancient prophecy, "The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," Mic. iv. 2. Let us see what sort of a church this was, and then let us inquire whether the church of Rome be like it. It consisted of a hundred and twenty men and women, including eleven apostles, or twelve, after they had supplied the place of Judas, at the first meeting after Christ's ascension, of which we have any detailed account. They were all genuine disciples of Christ, at least so far as was known to one another. I think this is clearly implied in the account which the inspired writer gives of them, Acts i. 14. "They all continued with *one accord* in prayer

and supplication ;" and we may easily judge what *discord* one known unbeliever would have made among them, considering the well known temper of the unbelievers of that day; for there was no such thing then as paying decent respect to Christian worship, as a compliment to public opinion, as is done by many unbelievers of the present day. On the day of Pentecost, that is, about ten days after Christ had ascended into heaven, the Holy Ghost came upon the disciples, as described in the second chapter of the Acts; when, by the preaching of the apostles, especially of Peter, the small original church received an addition of three thousand members. These had been among the betrayers and murderers of the Lord of glory; for Peter told them plainly, " God hath made that same Jesus, whom *ye* have crucified, both Lord and Christ." They had joined with the rest of their countrymen in that horrid imprecation, " His blood be on us and on our children!" " Away with him! crucify him!" and that blood did come upon them in a way that they had never thought of or expected: —it came upon them for the salvation of their souls; for such was the generosity and clemency of the Divine Saviour, that he instructed his apostles to begin their ministry at Jerusalem, that his very murderers might be the first to hear of his exaltation as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and

remission of sins. Accordingly, on that great festival, when many thousands were assembled at the place of public resort, the apostles began to preach. The people in general were astonished, and deeply affected by what they heard; and three thousand were pricked to the heart. They were deeply convinced of their guilt in general, and of this great crime in particular; and found themselves worthy of everlasting perdition. But when Peter told them of the mercy of God, as displayed in the gift of that very Saviour whom they had crucified; and had called them to repent and be baptized in the name of Christ, for the remission of their sins, they believed the glad tidings, for such it was to them. They gladly received the word, and were baptized, and were added to the church; and they adorned their new connexion by a new character. The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; and great grace was upon them all. Many more than these may have been also pricked to the heart, and filled with remorse and confusion, who yet refused the proffered salvation, and would go away contradicting and blaspheming; as was the case with the great body of that nation, though the gospel was preached to them: but the church in Jerusalems appears as a grateful company of saved sinners, whose great concern was to live to the glory of their Saviour.

This was the parent stock, and the first branches possessed the same character. These were the churches in Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, who not only endured the fire of persecution, but when they obtained rest, (which is perhaps more trying to the faith of Christians,) after the conversion of Paul, it is testified of them that they "were edified; and, walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied," Acts ix. 31. Throughout the remainder of the New Testament, we find the churches uniformly described as consisting of men who were separated from the world which lieth in wickedness, and different from the men of the world in their spirit, and conduct, and whole conversation. The distinction between Jew and Gentile was never more prominently marked in the time of Israel's greatest prosperity, than that between Christians and the men of the world is marked by the apostles in all their writings. "Ye are of God, little children," says the apostle John. A presumptuous and arrogant assumption, some would say; and so it was, had it not been true. But the truth of the statement is undeniable, from its being written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and it is repeated with the addition of what will be still more offensive to the carnal mind of the merely nominal Christian: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth

in wickedness," 1 John v. 19; that is, the whole human race, who had not embraced the gospel of Christ, were lying in wickedness, or in obedience to the wicked one, namely, the devil. Now, it was only those who were of God, and who were distinguished from the world, lying in subjection to the wicked one, that composed the apostolic churches. It is a fact, that false brethren did occasionally creep in unawares; that hypocrites, for wicked and selfish purposes, found admission into churches. But the guilt of this rested with themselves. The churches were not to blame, unless they consented to or connived at their continuing in church fellowship, after their hypocrisy was detected.

I find that these apostolic churches had bishops or pastors set over them, for their spiritual instruction and edification; and deacons ordained to be among them, for the purpose of ministering to the wants of the poor out of the churches' bounty. We have the qualifications of these bishops and deacons very particularly described; for the Divine wisdom foresaw that, according as their character might be, such would be also that of the churches over which they were placed. Let us see, then, what sort of persons bishops were to be. "A bishop, then, must be blameless, *the husband of one wife*, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to

teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his *own house*, *having his children* in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil," 1 Tim. iii. 2—7. The character and qualifications of deacons are described in the same chapter, with equal minuteness, and in language so plain as not to be mistaken. Now, there can be no doubt that, when the apostles superintended the churches, the character of the bishops, deacons, and also the body of the people, would be such as is above described. I enter not at all into the inquiry, What was the *form* of their church government? This, though by no means a matter of indifference, I hold to be of very inferior importance. The point which I wish to establish is, that the apostolic churches were composed of men and women who professed the faith of Christ, and proved the genuineness of their faith by holiness of life; and that, as members of his body, they held fellowship with one another, under the pastoral oversight of men of like character with themselves, but distinguished by a greater

degree of gifts and graces suitable to the importance and responsibility of their office. It was no very difficult matter, and it required no complicated machinery, to govern churches which were of one heart and soul, walking in the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Ghost; yet, even for such, there was a government necessary, and one was ordained. Pastors were appointed to teach, and to rule in the fear of God; and the people were required to submit to them that had the rule over them. But, while the apostles' doctrine was held fast, and their authority alone regarded as the rule, the people would fall as naturally into the right form of church government as the battalions of a well-disciplined army fall into order at the sound of the trumpet. "The law is not made for a righteous man," as an apostle tells us, "but for the lawless and disobedient," 1 Tim. i. 9. So *modern* systems of church government, I fear, call them by what name you will, were not made for such churches as the apostles planted, but for carnal and worldly-minded men, that they might be made the subjects of a sort of Christian restraint, though not converted to Christ, and separated from the world.

I am quite aware that great corruptions in doctrine and practice appeared in some of the apostolic churches, especially in that at Corinth, and in those of Galatia, and in some

of the seven churches in Asia; and from this circumstance the Head of the church took occasion to instruct his people how they should conduct themselves when such corruptions arose. They were commanded to keep themselves pure, and to put away from among them every member who had departed from the faith, or from holy practice. Knowing that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, they were instructed to purge out the old leaven; that is, to separate whatever had a tendency to withdraw their minds from the spiritual simplicity of Christ's gospel, or their practice from conformity with his law. And the fact of corruption appearing in a church, did not infer the condemnation of that church, if they did not consent to it, or suffer it to remain uncorrected. Erring and immoral church members had all to bear their own burden, when the church, on being unable to reclaim them, put them away; but if the church did not reclaim or put away such members, she was justly doomed to bear her part of the burden. Then it became the duty of those among them who loved and wished to obey the Saviour in all things, to attend to what was necessary for their own purity. They were commanded to withdraw from *every brother* who walked disorderly, and who refused to be reclaimed; which necessarily implies the duty of withdrawing from *any number of brethren*, even from *a whole*

church, when found disorderly and irreclaimable; so that the Reformers were guilty of no schism, but were only obeying a Divine command, when they separated from the church of Rome.

It is time now to apply these evidently scriptural principles to the church of Rome. She boasts, above all others, to be the holy, catholic, APOSTOLICAL church; that is, if the words have any meaning, such a church as the apostles planted and watered by their personal ministry. Are her members, then, in general, such as were the members of the churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, "walking in the fear of God?" I suspect that if the best of them were tried by this rule, they would be deplorably deficient; and as for thousands of them in Ireland, and not a few nearer home, they seem to live in the fear of nothing but the priest and the gallows; and a great number manifest no great fear even of these, at least of the latter. Dr. Milner claims for the church of Rome all *invincibly ignorant Christians*, as we have seen above, because they do not belong to any Protestant church; and, by the same rule, he will claim as his beloved children in the faith, all *incorrigibly wicked Christians*. He is, indeed, very welcome to them; and no one will deny that such form a large proportion of the church of Rome, if it be lawful to profane the word Christian by such a use of it;

but this proves her to be the very reverse of an apostolical church. For illustration and proof of this point, I refer to my 197th number, (sect. xvi.,) in which the deplorable wickedness of all ranks and classes in the "*holy* Catholic church," is described at length by approved authors of her own communion.

SECTION XX.

The reader is requested to connect the following with the conclusion of the last section.

But when Papists speak of the church, they mean particularly the clergy. I have shown, then, what sort of men the apostolic bishops were, which applies equally to the elders or priests, priest being merely a contraction of the Greek word presbyter. Let us now try the apostolicity of the Popish clergy by this rule. "A bishop, then, must be *blameless*." "The clergy," says Nicholas Clemangis, "are the dregs and scum of mankind, persons who abandon themselves to the most loathsome vices." See much more to the same purpose, certified by great Popish authors, in No. 197, (sect. xvi.) A bishop, and of course likewise a priest or elder, must be the husband of one wife. I do not think this means that he must necessarily be a married man, though the words literally express this, as plainly as those on which the church of Rome found their transubstantiation express that dogma.

From the lax morality of both Jews and Gentiles, on the subject of marriage, it is presumable that some of the Christian converts had a plurality of wives; an evil which could not well be remedied, without injustice to one party at least, until death should operate a cure; but the apostolic injunction required that no man in that unseemly and unchristian-like state should be called to fill any office in the churches. But nothing can be more evident than that the words admit the lawfulness of bishops being married; they even take it for granted that they have families of children. But how stands it with the church of Rome? She makes it absolutely unlawful for her priests to marry; and if the apostle Peter himself were to appear among them, though the popes pretend to derive all their authority from him, the first act of their authority towards him would be to make him put away his wife. Their opposition to the apostolic churches here would not be so glaring, if they lived chastely in their unmarried state; but the fact is notoriously the reverse, for which I refer again to No. 197, (sect. xvi.,) and to those numbers which treat of clerical celibacy, in vol. iii. The fact is, the Popish priests no more resemble the apostolic bishops, in this respect, than the idol of impurity resembles Joseph. There may be individual exceptions; but I speak of their prevailing character; and

from ecclesiastical historians of their own, we learn that, instead of ruling their own houses well, in the fear of God, the great concern of those who were wealthy was to make handsome provision for their bastards.

The apostle Peter was an example of what a pastor ought to be, and he gave a very plain description, for the guidance of the churches in all ages. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock," 1 Pet. v. 1—3. Try the apostolicity of the church of Rome, according to the rule here laid down by him whom she professes to regard as her founder, and the opposition will be found as great as that between God and Baal. Instead of not seeking filthy lucre, it would seem as if the clergy sought nothing else but that, and the sensual gratifications which it can procure; and if they are not lords over God's heritage, it is because this inheritance has withdrawn from their lordship; but over those who do submit to their authority they lord it more than any despot on the face of the earth.

It is equally easy to show that, in point of

doctrine, the church of Rome is the very opposite of the apostolic churches. I might confine myself to the discourses and epistles of Peter, whom they claim as their founder; and by these it could be shown that his pretended successors have departed from the faith; that, in short, these would-be successors of his are the very false teachers against whom he enters his caveat in the second chapter of his second epistle. Let the reader attentively compare what is written there with the characters of Popery and of Popish priests, as they have been exhibited in different parts of my work, from their own writers, and he will be struck with the resemblance.

The church of Rome has had the credit of maintaining the orthodox doctrine after many other churches had embraced great errors; such, for instance, as the Arian heresy, which afterwards merged itself in the Socinian, denying the Divinity and atonement of Christ. It is true, the church of Rome made a bold stand for a time, in defence of the truth in these points; but, eventually, she fell into the same errors in a more subtile form, which were therefore the more insinuating and dangerous. It was too much, even upon the verge of the dark ages, to persuade Christians in general that their Saviour, whom they had been taught to worship, was a mere creature, and that he did

not make atonement for the sins of his people; but the same satanic object was effected by persuading men to worship mere creatures, and to trust in the merits of creatures, and in their own penances. This, I believe, was a work of the devil's planning, for the leading men in the church had not foresight enough to perceive the result of certain early and apparently slight aberrations from the truth, which issued in the grand apostacy which the church of Rome has exhibited for many centuries; that is, the antichrist, of which the apostle John said, It shall come, and even now it is in the world; and, "He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son," 1 John ii. 22. The apostle Peter spoke of the same thing, when he said of the false teachers, "They shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them," 2 Pet. ii. 1. The leading character of this antichrist is, denying the Divinity and the atonement of Christ. This was done in two ways; first, by bringing him down to the level of a mere creature. This was for the learned and philosophical professors of Christianity; but there was something too shocking and violent in this for the bulk of the people. The second method served the purpose much better; that was, to bring up certain creatures to the rank and place of the Saviour. Some of these creatures were saints and martyrs, whose memory was held in

great veneration; and persons who would have shuddered at the thought of degrading Christ, experienced no such feeling when his friends and martyrs were exalted, when they were held as entitled to a sort of relative honour, when they were considered as intercessors in heaven, and had prayers addressed to them as such. This had not the revolting appearance of directly robbing Christ of his glory, as the Arian or Socinian doctrine had; and, of course, it gained ground more extensively. It was, however, the very same antichrist; for Christ is as much dishonoured by the presumption of raising a creature to his level, as by the impiety of bringing him down to the level of a creature.

These are the leading features of the antichrist who makes such a prominent figure in the apocalyptic parts of Scripture. The one is the opposition of science and worldly wisdom, the other is the opposition of bloated ignorance and superstition. Each has a multitude of ramifications, and they seem in many points to be directly opposed to each other; but both agree in creature worship and creature merit; and thus they are both alike subversive of genuine Christianity, and as far as possible removed from the character of apostolicity. My present business is with the church of Rome only; but if I can prove, as I think I can, that she symbolizes with Socinianism, this will go a great way to

prove, to the conviction of many readers, that she is not an apostolical church.

It will be recollected, that Dr. Milner shows a disposition to magnify Socinianism by insinuating that the churches of England and Scotland have almost universally gone into it, and by asserting that most Protestants of eminence deny that the Divinity of Christ can be proved from Scripture alone. See PROT., No. 192, (sect. xi.) Popish writers lay great stress upon the concessions of Protestants; and thus Dr. Milner does what he can to serve the Socinian cause, which leads me to devote a few pages to the subject of the Socinianism of Popery, in which I have little more to do than to give a few extracts, translated from a very curious and scarce work, which, I believe, was never translated into English. It is entitled, "*Roma Racoviana, et Racovia Romana;* that is, the full and exact Agreement of Papists and Socinians, in many of the points of their religion, and those the most important; in which the soul and marrow of both religions is clearly shown to be one and the same, and that one and the same spirit reigns in each apostacy," etc. By William Jamieson, Edinburgh, 1702.

In his epistle-dedicatory, he informs us that the Papists and Socinians, to whom, he says, all other sects may be reduced, or classed under, have generally been considered as diametrically opposite; but that it is his

intention, in this treatise, to demonstrate their firm unity and concord; and that their principles, spirit, end, and scope, are the same; and that, therefore, they are but two branches of that great apostacy which was predicted in the Holy Scriptures; and that this Babylonian apostacy is the universal gangrene, the poison of all former heresies, the mother of abominations, and the turbulent sea by which the Lord's field is inundated. He then pays a high tribute to the memory of King William, for his delivering the nation from Popery; which I mention here, because it has become fashionable in certain circles to speak slightingly of this truly great and liberal-minded prince, and to look upon those who profess to respect his memory as illiberal bigots. It is, however, no small testimony on his behalf, that his glory appeared most bright to those who stood near it—that the deliverance which he effected was most appreciated by those who were personally the subjects of that deliverance, and that he is lightly thought of only by persons who live at a distance, and who know only by report the grievous thraldom from which he emancipated the subjects of these kingdoms.

"Thus," says our author, "the Romanists deny the Holy Scriptures to be the last judge of controversy. The Socinians, in words, condemn this; but who does not see that

they agree in fact? They make a derision of innumerable passages of Scripture, clearer than the meridian sun. Again, the Socinians deny Christ's Divinity; the Papists expressly assert it; but they most impudently affirm that this doctrine cannot be proved from Scripture, and affirm positively that the primitive fathers were infected with Arianism, or left nothing against it; and they also overthrow the doctrine by allowing Divine worship to creatures. Thus they make common cause with the Socinians, and agree with them in practice, though they cry out against them. And, as the Socinians worship Christ, whom they yet denominate a mere creature, so also the Papists worship the virgin Mary and the pope; and I hope to show their agreement to the satisfaction of the candid reader." Sect. i. What he says here about worshipping Christ, believing him to be a mere creature, applies to the older Socinians. The modern ones, of the Priestleian school, more consistently deny all worship to Christ; and it is well known that, for such *consistency*, Socinus himself persecuted Davides, one of his own brethren.

Section second. Of the Scripture we read as follows:—

"I. The word of God is verbally acknowledged, and even at times honoured, by both Papists and Socinians. Cornelius A'Lapide, Justinian, and other Popish commentators on

2 Tim. iii. 15; the council of Trent, sess. i., and Bellarmine, De Verbo Dei, lib. i. cap. ii. 'There is nothing,' says he, 'more certain or better known, than the sacred Scriptures contained in the prophetic and apostolic writings; so that it must be the most egregious folly to deny that faith is to be had in them. That they are well known, the whole Christian world is witness, and the consent of all nations, where for many ages they have obtained the chief authority; they are also most true and certain, and contain, not human inventions, but Divine oracles, of which the first testimony is the truth of the prophecies,' etc. Socinus himself, in more than one of his published works, owns the authority of Holy Scripture. The Racovian Catechism, cap. 1; Valkelius de Vera Religione, lib. v. cap. v.; Slightingius, in 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.

"II. But both parties cry out that the originals (the Hebrew and Greek) are corrupted. Bellarmine, De Verbo Dei, lib. ii. cap. ii.; Pallavicino, Hist. Con. Trid., part i. lib. vi. cap. xvii. No. 3. 'They are so ambiguous, and so corrupt, that almost no sense can be drawn out of them.' And 'the Hebrew originals have been corrupted by the Jews, our enemies; and the Greek, by Grecian heretics and schismatics.' So Canus, Sixtus Senensis, etc. 'Among the Hebrews, there are innumerable ambiguous words,

which have been the cause of much contention.' Bale, the Jesuit, Catech. Tract. i. quest. 4. 'The original is lying.'

"To the Papists agree the Socinians. Thus the Racovian Catechism:—'There seems to exist a corruption of the Scripture in things of lesser moment.' Socinus, vol. i. p. 270. 'Now, respecting the corruption of the Holy Scriptures, if any man will say that it is most likely that, in the space of so many ages, when so many copies have been wrote out, that in many places they are changed, truly I will not deny it.' Another of their writers, in his disputation against the Jews, —'There are many traces of corruption and depravation, by the fault of the writers, exist in the New Testament.' Also, quest. xxiv. p. 115.—'When the Old Testament has received so many wounds, either through the carelessness or ignorance of librarians, it need not be wondered if the same have happened to the New Testament.'

"III. The Papists maintain that the 'apostles and evangelists, having received no command, wrote as occasion or circumstances required.' Bale, Tract. i. quest. 2. Bellarmine, De Verbo Dei, lib. iv. cap. iv.—Socinus, vol. i. p. 267. 'The oppositions or diversities, either true or apparent, which are in things of small moment, belong to history.' Valk. De Vera Rel. lib. v. cap. v. 'There is a real diversity in the Scriptures, though in things

of no (or at any rate of small) moment to a happy life.' And Grotius, as cited by Hornbeck, Socin. Conf. Trin. i. p. 6. 'All the books in the Hebrew canon were not dictated by the Holy Spirit.' And, 'If Luke had written by Divine inspiration, he would have claimed authority from thence, as the prophets did, and not from the witnesses he had been informed by.'

"IV. Bellarmine, De Verbo Dei, lib. iv. cap. iv., and Bale, Tract. i. quest. 3, affirm that many of the canonical books have perished. The same is the opinion of Socinus and Valkelius, De Vera Religione, lib. v. cap. v. 'It is understood that many of the books of the Old Testament have perished.'

"V. Pope worshippers deny that inferences may be deduced from Scripture. Veronius, cap. iii. Arnoux, Art. v. Bale, Tract. i. quest. 9. 'Where is it plainly written that there are three persons in the Trinity? Where is the Holy Spirit said to proceed from the Father and the Son, as is determined by the councils?' A careless reader would be apt to suppose that Bale meant to decry the councils; but a closer acquaintance with the genius of Popery would convince him of the reverse. His object is, to show that we are indebted to the councils, not to Scripture, for the definition of Catholic doctrine.

"Bellarmine contends that 'we are in no

wise justified by the imputed righteousness of Christ.' De Justif. lib. ii. cap. vii. And Bale, Tract. iv. quest. 10. 'The Scriptures nowhere use these words, Faith alone justifies.' In this the Socinians are willing disciples of the Papists;—'Whatever is necessary to salvation must be fully and literally written out in Holy Writ.' Smalcius, p. 1. And again, 'How can that be said to be necessary to salvation which is only drawn by consequence from Holy Scripture?' p. 70. Crellius, De Uno Deo Patre, lib. i. sect. 3, cap. i., uses this argument against the Deity of the Holy Ghost,—'The Holy Spirit is nowhere in Holy Writ plainly called God.'

"VI. The Papists believe, with the Socinians, that all that is necessary to be believed or performed is not to be found in Scripture. See Bellarmine, De Verbo Dei, lib. iv. cap. iv., and Bale, Tract. i. quest. 9. The Socinians worship their Christ, a mere man, with Divine worship. Valkel. lib. v. cap. xxix. 'It follows that we oppose that most pestilent opinion that Christ is not to be worshipped.' Yet he denies this worship to be commanded in Scripture, lib. iv. cap. ix.

"VII. The Papists deny the necessity of the assistance of the Holy Spirit for understanding the Scriptures savingly. Becanus, lib. iii. cap. x.; Bale, Tract. i. quest. 17. The same is affirmed by the Socinians,"—of which abundant evidence is adduced.

I find it would be endless to extract all that the author has collected on this subject. Papists and old Socinians seem evidently to have regarded the word of God with equal contempt; and as for the modern ones, I think Dr. Milner is fairly entitled to be classed with Dr. Priestley. The latter gentleman accused the apostles of reasoning "inconclusively," and Moses of giving a "lame account" of the creation; which is only a more honest way of expressing his contempt for the inspired writings than Dr. Milner's affected respect for them, while he contemns them for being an insufficient rule of faith.

This Mr. Jamieson (who he was I do not know*) fills a small quarto volume with quotations from Popish and Socinian writers, which prove not only the similarity but the identity of the two systems, in relation to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; such as the Trinity; the state of man, and his fall; providence, grace, and free will; of the law; of Christ; of justification; of the church and the sacraments: and of the frauds and desperate cause of the two sects. I might fill several numbers with extracts on these subjects, but I am afraid my readers would think them extremely dry. If I have shown

* [William Jamieson was Professor of History at Glasgow. For a list of his writings, see Watt's Bibliotheca. The second title of the work here quoted is, Papistarum et Socinistarum plena et exacta Harmonia.—ED.]

that the systems are the same in their contempt of the Holy Scriptures, it will be understood as comprising every subject of Divine revelation, according to the well-known geometrical axiom, The whole must comprehend all its parts. It is worth while, however, to add a few modern examples to those ancient ones which Mr. Jamieson has collected with so much industry.

I take Dr. Milner to be the oracle of living [English] Papists; and he tells us, in his eighth letter, "If Christ had intended that all mankind should learn his religion from a book, namely, the New Testament, he himself would have written that book," etc. Now, as we know Christ did not write the New Testament with his own hand, Dr. Milner's inference unavoidably is, that we are not to receive our religion from it, and that it is not to be depended upon. Again, "It does not even appear that he gave his apostles any command to write the gospel." See as above. Then it follows, that the apostolic writings were unauthorized, and of course without authority. Such, indeed, is the scope of the whole of Dr. Milner's eighth letter, of which a more particular account will be found in my 193rd number, (sect. xii.) Let us see, now, how modern Socinians treat the sacred volume. Dr. Priestley, speaking of reverence for it, says, "Not that I consider the books of Scripture as *inspired*, and on that

account entitled to this high degree of respect, but as authentic records of the dispensations of God to mankind, with every particular of which we cannot be too well acquainted."—"The writers of the books of Scripture were *men*, and therefore *fallible;* but all that we have to do with them is in the character of historians and witnesses of what they heard and saw."—"Like all other historians, they were liable to mistakes with respect to things of small moment, because they might not give sufficient attention to them; and, with respect to their *reasoning*, we are at full liberty to judge of it, as well as that of other men, by a due consideration of the propositions they advance and the arguments they allege; for it by no means follows, because a man has had communications with the Deity for certain purposes, and he may be depended upon with respect to his account of those communications, that he is in other respects more wise and knowing than other men." *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever, part* ii., *Preface, page* xiii.; *also Letter* v. In his *Letters to the Philosophers and Politicians of France*, Dr. Priestley says, "That the books of Scripture were written by particular Divine inspiration is a thing to which the writers themselves make no pretensions; it is a notion destitute of all proof, and that has done great injury to the evidence of Christianity." p. 38

The "Monthly Review," a well-known organ of this sect, lays down the Socinian doctrine relating to the Scriptures thus:—"The nature and design of the Scripture is not to settle disputed theories, nor to decide upon speculative controverted questions, even *in religion and morality*. The Scriptures, if we understand anything of them, are not intended so much to make us wiser, as to make us better; not to solve the doubts, but rather to make us *obey the dictates of our consciences*." March, 1793. p. 357. See this subject discussed, in a masterly manner, in Letter xii. of "Fuller's Systems Compared," one of the ablest controversial works in the English language. It was well said by one of the reviewers, when this work appeared, that the great philosopher, Priestley, in the hands of the plain Baptist minister, whose education extended little beyond common English, was no more than a dwarf in the hands of a giant.

SECTION XXI.

THE reader must not suppose from what I have said of Socinianism, that I intend to make war against any sect of Protestants. This would very ill become THE PROTESTANT, who has received such countenance from all denominations to whom the name belongs. But Socinianism does not belong to Protest-

antism; it is as far removed from it as Popery itself. The Deity and atonement of Christ are as essential to the Protestant religion as is freedom from the tyranny of Rome. This, I suppose, will not be denied by any Socinian, and of course those of that persuasion cannot properly call themselves Protestants. There may be individuals of Socinian principles in communion with Protestant churches, just as concealed Papists may be—to the shame of both be it said: but to call any Protestant church Socinian, would be as unjust as to call it Popish.

Popery and Socinianism decidedly agree in this, that there is an authority among men superior to the Scriptures, by which the Scriptures are to be tried, and have their meaning determined. This may be called the nucleus of the two systems: here they unite in a common centre, and this establishes their identity, notwithstanding the fact that they diverge from it in many different directions. The authority which Papists set over the Scripture is the church and tradition: that which the Socinians set over it is reason and conscience. "I have proved to you," says Dr. Milner, "that the whole business of the Scriptures belongs to the church. She has preserved them, she vouches for them, and she alone, by confronting the several passages with each other, and by the *help of tradition, authoritatively* explains

them." *Letter* xii. See the whole passage in PROTESTANT, No. 193, (Sect. xii.) Compare this with the doctrine of the Socinian reviewer quoted in last section:—"The Scriptures were intended, not to solve the doubts, but rather to make us obey the dictates of our conscience." Here conscience is put where Papists put the church. Its authority is supreme; it receives not information from Scripture, as to what is right or wrong, true or false; for this must be the meaning of not being intended to solve doubts, else there is no meaning in the words; but conscience itself determines what is right, and what ought to be done, and Scripture is brought in only as an auxiliary to enforce obedience to this supreme authority; this idol Socinians exalt above the word of God, as Papists do the church.

The two systems are only different modifications of the one apostasy, which originated in man's departure from God at the fall. They both are the religion of corrupt human nature, which refuses to submit to the will, and wisdom, and righteousness of God, and which would exalt the creature above all that is called God, and that is worshipped. But they are calculated for very different states of society. Popery suits a state of besotted ignorance, vice, and superstition; and when the devil held what was called Christendom in bondage by these, he found little use for his other

instrument; and, therefore, what we call Socinianism was little heard of during the dark ages. But when the adversary found that the Reformation had given so much light to the world, that he could not hope to rule much longer by means of ignorance, he laid hold of the other branch of the system, by means of which he tried to maintain his dominion over the souls of men. The revival of the old error, which took the name of Socinus, was almost coeval with Luther's reformation; and by this the carnal, inquisitive, philosophical mind was fascinated, and diverted from the simplicity of Christ's gospel, and of course from Christ's salvation, as really as the gross and superstitious mind had been diverted from it, by means of tradition, holy water, and lying wonders.

Let the reader observe, that my aim in this and last section is to show the identity of *Popery* and *Socinianism*. I am not speaking of *Papists* and *Socinians* personally, or by any means intending to insinuate, much less to assert, that the prevailing character of the two bodies is the same. Where ignorance is held to be the mother of devotion, and where the great aim of public *teachers* is to keep the people in ignorance, the state of taste, morals, and every thing must be very low. But the Socinians do not cultivate ignorance upon principle. In respect of literature, and all the decencies of enlightened society, they are

not behind their Protestant neighbours. They acknowledge no foreign power, civil or religious; they do not profess that it is lawful to propagate their principles by force, or to punish men for heresy; and therefore they ought not to be regarded as dangerous neighbours, or in any respect incapable of being good subjects and useful members of society, in any department which they are qualified to occupy.

I have thus endeavoured to show that, in point of doctrine, as well as in the prevailing character of her members, the church of Rome is the reverse of apostolical. I have not gone into a detail of doctrinal errors, but have rather fixed on one great prominent heresy, which contains in its bosom everything that is opposed to the gospel of Christ; and having shown that the church of Rome identifies itself with this heresy, by setting human authority over the word of God, it is not necessary to descend to a minute analysis of her subordinate errors.

But it is time to attend to what Dr. Milner means by the *apostolicity* of his church. This is neither evangelical doctrine nor holy life; it is something which he describes as "succession" from the apostles; it is something like the carnal descent of a noble or royal family, according to which, if a man can prove his propinquity, he claims the estates and the honours of some ancient family.

Thus Dr. Milner lays down the noble, or rather sacerdotal, succession of himself and his brethren, down to the lowest parish priest, in the most ignorant part of the world:—"Thus, my dear sir, every Catholic pastor is authorized and enabled to address his flock as follows:—'The word of God, which I announce to you, and the holy sacraments, which I dispense to you, I am QUALIFIED to announce and dispense by such a Catholic bishop, who was consecrated by such another Catholic bishop, and so on, in a series which reaches to the apostles themselves; and I am AUTHORIZED to preach and minister to you by such a prelate, who received authority for this purpose from the successor of St. Peter, in the apostolic see of Rome.'" *Letter* xxix., p. 139. In reading such contemptible nonsense, one's mind is unavoidably brought into contact with childish things. The reader must therefore bear with me when I say, that this account of Popish succession forcibly reminded me of "the house that Jack built."

This article of apostolical succession is one of the most absurd figments that even Popery itself can produce; for though it were possible for modern priests to prove that they have come in an unbroken line of succession from the apostles, it would be of no use to them, unless they brought also the doctrine of the apostles; and even then it would be of no use to them, for their bringing of the

apostles' doctrine, and exhibiting the holy life which it produces, would serve every purpose of an evangelical ministry, without the succession. But this succession they cannot possibly prove, and therefore, upon the principle of its being a mark of the true church, they must stand condemned, because they are found wanting. In a late section, I stated the fact, that there had been many great schisms in the church of Rome, some of them continuing for many years, during which period rival popes excommunicated each other, while each created cardinals, and performed all the functions competent to the head of the church. One at least of these heads, for there were three at one time, must necessarily have been false; all the spiritual functions derived from the false head must have been false likewise; the priests who derived their powers from such a source were no priests; the bishops consecrated in virtue of such authority were no bishops, and all their ordinations were null and void; and no bishop or priest of the present day can prove that he is come of the right line, therefore all that they build upon the notion of their apostolical succession falls to the ground.

Let us see how Dr. Milner attempts to get over this difficulty. "I grant, sir, that from the various commotions and accidents to which all sublunary things are subject, there have been several vacancies or interregnums

in the papacy; but none of them have been of such a lengthened duration as to prevent a moral continuation of the popedom, or to hinder the execution of the important offices annexed to it. I grant also that there have been rival popes and unhappy schisms in the church, particularly one great schism at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century: still the true pope was always clearly discernible at the times we are speaking of, and in the end was acknowledged even by his opponents." When and by whom was this discerned, and when was this acknowledgment made by opposing pontiffs? This is a mere assertion of the doctor's own, without so much as an attempt to adduce evidence in support of it: and, supposing his assertion were true as to the opposing popes themselves, what became of the many thousands of bishops and priests who derived spiritual faculties from them? Were they turned back to the rank of mere laymen, upon the degradation of the popes that made them? No such thing. This is not so much as pretended; and those who received ordination and consecration from the false pope, and those who received the same from them and their successors, cannot now be distinguished from those who derived these faculties from the true pope; so that there is not a priest in the world who can prove his apostolical pedigree!

But Dr. Milner continues:—"Lastly, I grant that a few of the popes, perhaps a tenth of the whole number," (nine-tenths would have been nearer the truth,) "swerving from the example of the rest, have, by their *personal vices*, disgraced their holy station; but even these popes always fulfilled their *public duties* to the church, by maintaining the *apostolical doctrine*, moral as well as speculative, the *apostolical orders*, and the *apostolical mission*." *Letter* XXX., p. 154. Here we have something that seems to border on the miraculous; and I hope Dr. Milner will thank me for pointing it out to the world, as it may tend to his canonization a hundred years after his death: it is, that popes, who by their personal vices *disgraced their holy station*, yet *always fulfilled their public duties to the church!* We Protestants, in our simplicity, have been accustomed to think that the first *public duty* which a pastor owes to the church, is to give them an example of personal purity. "Keep THYSELF pure," was a charge which Paul gave to Timothy, obedience to which was essential to his profiting others by his ministry; but Dr. Milner does most miraculously reconcile personal vices, which disgraced the holy station of the popes, with perfection of public duty, in those whose duty it was to be examples to the flock "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," 1 Tim. iv. 12. I entreat Dr Milner to publish a satisfactory account

of the process by which the *holy fathers* of Rome, who disgrace their holy station by their personal vices, are yet able always to fulfil their public duties to the church! If he can give a satisfactory explanation of this mystery, I shall never ask him to perform another miracle.

But that the whole matter of apostolic succession is a mere figment, and a very absurd one, will, I hope, appear from what follows. In the first place, the apostles themselves never laid any stress upon it, and never so much as mentioned it as a mark of the true church. Paul, in his epistles to both Timothy and Titus, gives a very particular description of the qualifications necessary for bishops and deacons, but he says not a word of the necessity of their apostolical succession; that is, that they should be ordained by the apostles, or by men who had received ordination at second or third hand from the apostles, much less from the thousandth hand, as it must be now, or at some period of the world, if such a thing were necessary. Nay, supposing a man to have received ordination from all the twelve apostles together, if this man should afterwards have departed from the faith, his ordination would have availed nothing to himself, and he would have possessed nothing that he could convey to another man. I am not speaking against the necessity of regular and proper ordination to

the Christian ministry, but what I mean is, *that all that is valuable in it*, to any individual or church over which he may be placed, is connected with his holding the truth as it is in Jesus. Distinct from this truth, he has nothing in himself that can be useful in a spiritual sense; and he has nothing that he can communicate to others by the imposition of his hands.

There was one man who received apostolical ordination to the deacon's office, who, if ancient ecclesiastical writers say the truth, became the head of an immoral sect, which is condemned in the strongest terms by Christ himself. This was Nicolas, one of the seven, mentioned Acts vi. 5, who is said to have been the leader of the sect of the Nicolaitanes, see Rev. ii. 6. I confess I have seen nothing that fully convinces me that this sect took its name from the same Nicolas; or, supposing that certain wicked men assumed his name, I have seen nothing that convinces me that he was the author of their heresy. Wicked men in all ages have chosen to call themselves by respectable names; and the most wicked of all sects have had the impiety to call themselves by that name at which, it is said, every knee shall bow. But Papists, who believe in tradition, have no right to take advantage of *my* doubts. They, I suppose, believe most firmly that Nicolas the deacon was the father of the Nicolaitanes.

Do they then believe, that after these heretics had departed from the faith of Christ so far as to incur the condemnation: "This thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Again, "So hast thou them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." Do they, I say, believe that after Nicolas had become such an apostate, his apostolical ordination was of any use to him, or that he had still the power of conferring orders upon others? Can one confer upon another the power of preaching sound doctrine from which he himself has departed? or can the apostolic ordination of a man to preach the truth empower that man to ordain others to preach falsehood and error? I presume that even Dr. Milner will not answer this question in the affirmative; and if he cannot, he must allow the whole mystery of apostolic succession to go for nothing.

I am aware that deacons are not understood to have the power of ordaining; but Dr. Milner knows that many bishops embraced heresy at an early period, to whom what I have said of Nicolas applies. If they had apostolical ordination, it was ordination to teach and defend the truth, and it imparted no power to ordain others for an opposite purpose. So far from laying any stress upon apostolical ordination, the apostle Paul, who received his commission from Christ, declares

that even this Divine ordination would become void, if he departed from the faith, and became a preacher of error: "Though *we*, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," Gal. i. 8. The church of Rome, therefore, like every other church, must be tried by her doctrine, and the lives of her members, not by the apostolic succession of her clergy.

But, secondly, we have a plain rule laid down, by which we are to recognize true Christian teachers, and in this rule there is not a word about apostolical succession. "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:* for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds," 2 John 7—11. Here, then, the question is not whether a professed teacher of Christianity has regular ordination and apostolical succession, but what doctrine does he bring? Again:—"Believe not every spirit, but try

the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world," 1 John iv. 1—3. Here Christians are called to occupy the high ground of judges of what men, professing to be teachers, say to them. A Popish priest tells his people, "The word of God which I announce to you, and the holy sacraments which I dispense to you, I am qualified to announce and dispense by such a Catholic bishop, who was consecrated by such another Catholic bishop," etc. Thus he assumes an air of authority, which sets the judgment of the people completely at defiance. He comes to them as their lord and master, and he treats them as his slaves; but the really Christian teacher comes as a servant to his fellow creatures: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," 2 Cor. iv. 5; and every such faithful preacher desires to find his Christian brethren an intelligent people, and able to bring his preaching to the test of the Divine record. This would never do in the church of Rome. Her members must receive every

thing upon the authority of the priests, who have received a certain mysterious communication from the apostles, to teach what no man has a right to try, as the apostle John commanded to try the spirits; from which it is evident, that Papists are not the sort of persons whom the apostle addressed. In all his address there is no account made of apostolical succession. The spirits, that is, the teachers, might have this, or they might not; the thing which all who listened to their teaching were called to judge of, was the doctrine which they taught.

This was summarily comprehended in the question, whether or not Jesus Christ was come in the flesh? Those who denied this were the antichrist of the day. But such a general proposition must be taken as including all that it necessarily implies. Thus, when Christ himself was on earth, the great question was, whether he was the Christ or not? Those who believed the affirmative, submitted to him as the Christ and the Saviour of the world, and this implied the recognition of him in his whole character, as set forth in the Scriptures. In like manner, the acknowledgment that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh implies his pre-existence; for who would say of a mere creature born into the world, He is *come* in the flesh? And it implies an acknowledgment of the design and purpose of his coming into the world,

that is, to make an atonement, or put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Now, the antichrist whom the apostle John describes was one who denied these things; and whether this was Arius, a mere presbyter, who denied the Divinity and atonement of Christ, and his host of followers; or the bishops of Rome, who, while professing to believe in the Divinity and atonement of Christ, equally subverted the truth with regard to both, by raising mere creatures to the rank of intercessors and objects of Divine worship; and by teaching the necessity of the sacrifice of the mass, to give efficacy to Christ's sacrifice—the antichrist is equally manifest: and had it been possible for apostles themselves to have brought such doctrine, they would have been justly rejected; how much more a host of immoral and heretical priests, who rest their claim to ecclesiastical authority upon a pretended descent in a right line from the apostles!

I grant that the apostle John's antichrist seems at first view to have more of the Socinian than the Popish character. It is a denying, or not having the Father and the Son; that is, not acknowledging the Christian doctrine of Him who sent, and of Him who was sent into the world. But, as I have shown, the two systems unite in effecting the same thing, only the Popish method is less open and direct than the Socinian. Christ either

made satisfaction or atonement for sin, or he did not. The Socinian says at once that he did not; the Papist says that he did; but then he immediately unsays this, by teaching that every man must yet satisfy Divine justice for himself, less or more; and that the mass is a propitiatory sacrifice for sin; which implies, as plainly as a thing can be expressed by implication, that Christ's sacrifice was not sufficient, and therefore did not make atonement for sin. Besides, to say that the work which Christ finished on the cross is imperfect, which it must be if it require the addition of any human work, or any sacrifice by human hands, is to deny that Christ is God, for all God's works are perfect. Thus Popery is the very antichrist that denies the Lord, who redeemed his church by his own blood.

SECTION XXII.

I BEGIN to feel, as I believe many of my readers have felt, that it is time to have done with Dr. Milner. I have touched upon the most prominent parts of his work; and have even descended to notice some of its trifling and subordinate parts; and there is just one thing more in his second part, which I think worthy of particular notice. Suspecting, I suppose, that his arguments would fail to convince the *reason* of his readers, that the church of Rome is an apostolical church, he

has made an attempt, by means of a copper-plate, to satisfy their *eyes*, that she is at least a most *flourishing* church! He gives us a figure of her, under what he calls "*The Apostolical Tree*," and a most noble tree it is; but it reminds me of some rhymes which children at school are accustomed to repeat over the figure of the Glasgow arms, which they have in the front of their catechisms,—"This is the tree that never grew," etc.*

The following is the title of this sublime graphic representation:—"THE APOSTOLICAL TREE, showing the Uninterrupted Succession of the Catholic Church from the apostles of Jesus Christ down to the present time; likewise the chief Heretics and Schismatics, who have in different ages been cut off from her communion." Over the root is inscribed these words, "I am the vine," etc. This is surmounted by a naked human figure, meant to represent the Saviour as crucified, his hands nailed to two branches, and his feet nailed together to the trunk, having under

* [This engraving is omitted in the small cheap editions lately circulated, but it was so characteristic of Popery, and is here so ably exposed, that this description, (and it is a faithful one,) as well as the remarks upon it, are retained. They bear upon the main controversy.

The Glasgow arms are a bird, a fish, a tree, and a bell. The following are the lines referred to:—

This is the tree that never grew,
This is the bird that never flew
This is the bell that never rang
And this is the fish that never swam.—ED.

them a bunch of rich grapes. The first living branch on the right hand of the figure is the blessed Virgin, then comes St. Joseph, then the holy Innocents. The first branch on the left hand is Jerusalem and Syria, then St. Mary Magdalene, then St. John the Baptist; but why he is brought in so late is not explained. The branches, as we ascend, are marked by the names of apostles, evangelists, and minor saints, and of nations which were converted to the faith, at the periods indicated by the insertion of the branches into the trunk, like the degrees of latitude in the margin of a map. Thus every century is marked on the trunk of the tree, up to the beginning of the nineteenth, where Pius VIIth stands at a very giddy height, and in much more danger of a fall than St. Peter, who stands at the bottom of the list, immediately over the head of the crucified figure, on which he might seem to press with all the weight which his name signifies, but for a bunch of grapes which intervenes. The trunk itself is one of the greatest natural curiosities (if it were natural) that ever was seen; for though it is of amazing height, there is no tapering in it! The diameter of the top is as great as that near the bottom; but, what is perhaps still more singular, on each side there are many branches, which have been lopped off, and which are suspended in mid air. These have all names of great notoriety; the

first on the right is Ebion, on the left Simon Magus; and of the later ones, at the top, we have on the one hand, Wesley, Whitefield, Swedenborgh, and Lebon; and on the other, Rousseau, Voltaire, Zinzendorf, Brienne, Robespierre, and Condorcet: and in defiance of the principle of gravitation, while they seem to be falling from an immense height, they have all their points, or light leafy parts, towards the earth, and their solid heavy timber towards the sky; which, I suppose, Dr. Milner has done on purpose, in order to show that heretics are such rebels against all law, that they will not submit even to the law of gravity, and thus they are more hardened than the very stones!

Above the tree, there is a view of what is meant for heaven. In the centre there is a triangle, within which is the sacred name in Hebrew characters, and around it there are rays of glory. This is meant to represent the Trinity. On both sides, there are companies of priests and nuns in their canonical robes, looking towards the triangle. The foremost on one side seems to be the pope, who has a small figure of the cross stuck into his scull, like a pin in a pincushion; and his hands are half lifted and stretched out, as if he were warming his fingers at the bright rays which surround the figure in the centre. Above are little figures twittering like so many sparrows, which, I suppose, are meant for angels.

It is impossible to treat such a picture with seriousness, and yet it is not a proper subject of ridicule. Though there was nothing else objectionable in Dr. Milner's work, this would convict him, and all who believe in him, of gross and abominable idolatry; nay, of representing heaven itself as an idol's temple; for there he exhibits the church triumphant as worshipping a material figure of three equal sides. This is an image of the Deity which Dr. Milner sets up to be adored, which is idolatry of a much grosser kind than that of the ancient heathen who worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, for these are God's work, and they display his glory; while Dr. Milner teaches men to worship an image drawn by his own pen, or by the stylus of the engraver. The worship of reptiles, of which some heathens are guilty, degrading as it is, is more noble than this; for there is more of God in any thing that has life than there is in the greatest works of man. I cannot allow myself to believe that Dr. Milner seriously thinks the Deity is like a triangle; and therefore I suspect he has introduced the figure to serve the cause of his friends the Socinians; for, independently of the horrible impiety of forming any visible representation of the Divine Being, which he has most peremptorily forbidden, the Socinians could not desire a greater concession on the subject of the Trinity, than the use of such an

image, even for illustration; for as one side is not a triangle, if the Deity were like this, no one of the sacred three in whose name we are baptized, would be God; and thus Popery and Socinianism combine to lead men to atheism, which is indeed the natural tendency of every system by which Deity is degraded to the rank of a creature, or by which an image of him is formed either by the hand or by the mind of man.

Dr. Milner, however, appears to be quite serious in his graphic representation of the church in both earth and heaven. Of the latter, indeed, he says little or nothing but what appears in the picture; but of the former, that is, the church on earth, he thus boasts:—"Again, you behold, in this tree, the continuation of the apostolical work, the conversion of nations; which, as it was committed by Christ to the Catholic church, so it has never been blessed by him with success in any hands but hers. This exclusive miracle, in the order of grace, like those in the order of nature, which I treated of in a former letter, is itself a Divine attestation on her behalf," *Letter* xxix. p. 137 It is scarcely worth while to inquire what he means by miracles "in the order of nature;" for all who understand the meaning of the words know, that things in the order of nature, that is, things *natural*, however strange and surprising, are quite different from things

miraculous; but it is one great vice prevalent among Popish writers, that their language wants precision; and they use words in so vague a manner, that they can easily be made to mean any thing, or nothing, as may suit the purpose of the writers or their friends at a subsequent period, when they are called to account for what has been written by them.

But if any meaning can be attached to the above extract, I take it to be, that Christ has never honoured any but the church of Rome to be instrumental in converting nations to the Christian faith; and that when she is honoured to perform this work, it is a miraculous "attestation on her behalf;" and I am by no means disposed to deny, that if so corrupt a church were to convert a nation, or even an individual, to the holy faith of the gospel, it would look like a miracle! Such a miracle, I believe, has not been performed within her pale for a thousand years. I do not deny that many individuals in her communion may have been converted within this period; not by means of her influence and authority as a church, but because she had always some who had access to the word of God, and who thence, in spite of the malign influence of the church, received the truth to the salvation of their own souls.

Conversion is a strange wholesale sort of work, in the opinion of Dr. Milner, and in his apostolical tree; he gives a large branch here

and there, showing when, and under what pope, such and such nations were converted; and in many instances their conversion turns out to be the same thing as their subjugation by the sword of an invading enemy. Such was the conversion of the Indians in South America by the Spanish missionaries, who accompanied the barbarous hordes of ruffians who invaded and conquered that effeminate people. They were mercifully allowed the alternative of worshipping the crucifix or being put to death; and, though savages, they must have been convinced in their own consciences that it was more noble to worship the sun than two cross sticks, yet we cannot imagine that many of them had the hardihood to stand out long against such pointed and solid arguments as bayonets and bullets. It was no wonder, then, that they became converts to the faith of Rome; but the consequence was, that they had only exchanged idols, and continued heathens under the name of Christians. The same remark applies to the many thousands whom St. Francis Xavier and other missionaries are said to have converted in the East, though I do not say that similar violence was usually practised by them, though the Portuguese are blamed for converting men there at the point of the sword. The arts of deception were enough to produce all the effects that are reported to

have taken place in these quarters, under the direction of Jesuit missionaries, among another simple and effeminate race of men, of whom nothing was required but to submit to the sprinkling of a little water, and conformity to a few other rites equally easy and inoffensive, while they were not required to forsake sin, or to have their affections in the least changed from sin to holiness. I recollect having read somewhere of St. Augustine of Canterbury, or of one of his companions, to whom such crowds of our Saxon ancestors came for baptism at one time, that, finding it impossible to baptize them all individually, he consecrated all the water in a river, and took an instrument such as bleachers use to throw water over a field covered with linen, and thus he made the whole multitude converts by throwing the water among them. I do not vouch for the literal truth of this story, for I do not recollect where I read it, or on whose authority it is related. But it exhibits a fair specimen of the manner of making converts by Popish missionaries; and the tens of thousands whom Dr. Milner boasts of as having been baptized in the East Indies and China, by certain missionaries, in a short space of time, can be accounted for only in some such way as this; for, allowing that they were all baptized one by one, the missionary could have no more knowledge of

their personal characters, than if he had baptized them by thousands at a time by water thrown from a fire engine.

This, however, is what Dr. Milner means by conversion. It is to get men to submit to the external rite of baptism by missionaries who have apostolical succession; and when such missionaries follow in the train of conquering armies, nations are easily converted. Thus the Vandals received Christianity, such as was presented to them, at the point of the sword, from the Teutonic knights of Charlemagne. "Thus Clovis and his Franks, Rollo and his Normans, were converted in a day, not from Satan to God, but from *barefaced* paganism to *paganized* Christianity." Of nothing greater than this has Rome to boast; and yet Dr. Milner does boast of it, as a work which Christ has never blessed in the hands of any but Romish apostolical missionaries. But this is an achievement for which no Protestant — no real Christian — will envy them. It is such a process of conversion as Christ never approved; and the consequence is, that such converts are made more the children of the devil than they were before. The humble Christian missionary, who is honoured to be the instrument of converting one soul to God, though he did no more in his whole life, has more blessings upon his labour, than if he had converted the empire of China to Popery, or to merely nominal

Christianity under any name; and though Dr. Milner treats with great derision and contempt the Moravians, Methodists, Baptists, and other Protestant missionaries, I have no doubt some of them will be honoured at the great day with, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," when those who have deceived the nations by false miracles and a spurious Christianity will be covered with shame and everlasting contempt.

The third part of Dr. Milner's work consists of a formal defence of those articles of the creed of Rome, by which she is chiefly distinguished from other churches; or rather, those articles which the Reformers rejected and condemned. These are—the Invocation of Saints and Angels; the Worshipping of Relics, or what he calls Religious Memorials. He concludes his defence of this in the following words: "It is a point agreed upon among Catholic doctors and divines, that the memorials of religion (that is, images and relics) form no essential part of it. Hence, if you should become a Catholic, as I pray God you may, I will never ask you, if you have a pious picture or relic, or so much as a crucifix, in your possession: but then I trust, after the declarations I have made, that you will not account me an idolater, should you see such things in my oratory or study, or

should you observe how tenacious I am of my crucifix in particular. Your faith and devotion may not stand in need of such memorials; but mine, alas! do. I am too apt to forget what my Saviour has done and suffered for me; but the sight of his representation often brings this to my memory, and affects my sentiments. Hence I would rather part with most of the books in my library, than with the figure of my crucified Lord." *Letter* xxxiv. p. 33. This is a plain acknowledgment that his notions of Deity do not rise above material objects; for if he cannot remember his Saviour without an image of him, though his human nature was an object of sense, he cannot at all think of God, who is a spirit, without a visible representation of him. Thus he practises and teaches that very idolatry which is condemned throughout the whole Bible, and which it was the design of God, by a revelation of himself, to banish from the earth.

The other articles which Dr. Milner defends in this part of his work are Transubstantiation, in all the grossness of it—Communion under one kind, that is, withholding the cup from the laity—the Sacrifice of the Mass—Absolution from Sin—Indulgence—Purgatory—Extreme Unction—the Papal Supremacy, along with which he attempts to prove that the pope is not antichrist—and a defence of his church against various misre-

presentations, particularly of her persecuting spirit. On all these subjects I have written enough, particularly in my replies to the Catholic Vindicator, who, in his labours, drew largely upon this work of his great patron; so that, if I were to reply to Dr. Milner on the above points, I would be necessarily taken over ground which I have already occupied, and from which I have completely driven the enemy; for not one of our Papists has ventured to renew the attack, or even to stand on the defensive, since their hired champion was silenced two years and a half ago: and I suspect Dr. Milner himself will not condescend to enter the lists with a layman. This I know is the pretext of another [Romish] clergyman for declining to defend his church against THE PROTESTANT; but this is all hollow jesuitical shuffling; for as Papists profess to believe that Protestant ordination is null and void, I am no more a layman, in their opinion, than the archbishop of Canterbury.

Before concluding, I shall indulge the reader with a few sentences from Dr. Milner's Letter on Supremacy: "It is not, then, the faith of this church, that the pope has any civil or temporal sovereignty, by virtue of which he can depose princes, or take away the property of other persons, out of his own domain: for even the incarnate Son of God, from whom he derives the supremacy which

he possesses, did not claim, here upon earth, any right of the above-mentioned kind: on the contrary, he positively declared, that his *kingdom is not of this world!* Hence, the Catholics of both our islands have, without impeachment even from Rome, denied upon oath that the pope has any civil jurisdiction, power, superiority, or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, within this realm. But as it is undeniable that different popes, in former ages, have pronounced sentence of deposition against certain contemporary princes, and as great numbers of theologians have held (though not as a matter of faith) that they had a right to do so, it seems proper, by way of mitigating the odium which Dr. Porteus and other Protestants raise against them on this head, to state the grounds on which the pontiffs acted and the divines reasoned in this business. Heretofore, the kingdoms, principalities, and states, composing the Latin church, when they were all of the same religion, formed, as it were, one Christian republic, of which the pope was the accredited head. Now, as mankind have been sensible, at all times, that the duty of civil allegiance and submission cannot extend beyond a certain point, and that they ought not to surrender their property, lives, and morality, to be sported with by a Nero or a Heliogabalus; instead of deciding the nice point for themselves, *when resistance becomes lawful*, they

thought it right to be guided by their chief pastor." *Letter* xlvi. p. 131. Here Dr. Milner admits that an odium attaches to the Papal administration; and that, so far from being able to remove, he can only mitigate it. And his mitigation consists in admitting the fact, that the pope exercised authority over all Christian states; and that for the express purpose "of deciding the nice point," when subjects should rebel against their sovereigns. And this must always have been when the thing was agreeable to the pope himself, and when sovereigns refused to be subject to him; as in the case of King John, and Henry VIII., and Queen Elizabeth. It is true Dr. Milner confines his admission to the case of such sovereigns as Nero and Heliogabalus; but he has no right to do so, for the pope is the sole judge; and Dr. Milner knows that, in the esteem of the pope, a heretical prince is infinitely more hateful than a Nero. Whenever, therefore, Papists shall become powerful enough, for the purpose, in this kingdom, the pope will "decide the nice point," when they shall throw off a Protestant and bring in a Popish sovereign. A sentence or two further on, indeed, Dr. Milner tells us that, "since Christendom has been disturbed by a variety of religions, this power of the pontiff has been *generally* withdrawn." This is to quiet our fears in the mean time; for it was never *fully* withdrawn; and this

power was never disclaimed by the pope himself, so that we may expect he will resume the exercise of it whenever an occasion offers.

The reader will readily perceive a striking contrast between the pope, even according to Dr. Milner's partial representation of him, and the apostle Peter, from whom he pretends to derive his authority. It was in the reign of Nero, and such as he, that Peter and Paul commanded every soul to be subject to the higher powers; and to pray for kings and all in authority: but the pope sets himself above all sovereigns, and makes it his business to "decide the nice point," when subjects shall no longer obey, but rebel!

Yet it seems it is not the faith of the church that the pope possesses temporal sovereignty, because Jesus Christ did not claim this when on earth. Does Dr. Milner then really believe, or wish us to believe, that the conduct and claims of the pope are regulated by those of Jesus Christ? His words imply no less than this impudent mockery of his readers, whom he must take to be no better than beasts of burden, else he would not venture to insult them by insinuating such a palpable falsehood—a falsehood detected by his own words in the same paragraph. Christ declined being a judge, or a divider among men, in their temporal affairs; but, according to Dr. Milner's own account, the pope

was the accredited head of kingdoms; and that "the kings and princes themselves acknowledged this right in the pope, and frequently applied to him to make use of his indirect temporal power, as appears in numerous instances."

Dr. Milner has another quibble, in the words of the oath, which, he says, Papists in this country swear; that is, that the pope *has not* any civil jurisdiction, power, etc., within this realm. We know very well that he *has not*, and we do not require to be informed of *the fact* by them. But whom are we to thank for this? Our noble ancestors, who threw off the yoke, which their degenerate children are labouring to rivet on again. Papists will not swear that the pope *ought not to have* any civil authority in this kingdom; and if they did, no man would believe them in earnest.

SECTION XXIII.

Dr. Milner, like most other Popish writers, repeats the silly boast of the duke of Brunswick, that many Protestants, in the prospect of death, seek to be reconciled to the church of Rome; but that he never knew an instance of a Papist in these circumstances desiring to die a Protestant. I do not know whether this is true or not; but, supposing it to be true, it proves nothing in favour of

Popery, which, like every other system, ought to rest upon its own merits, and not upon what either dying or living men think of it. Both may be under a great delusion, and that multitudes, both living and dying, are so, is too evident to admit of reasonable doubt. A deceived heart has turned men aside from the love of God and obedience to him; and when they receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, he sends them strong delusion; that is, he leaves them to the influence of those errors and vices which they have chosen, and from which they refuse to be reclaimed. This delusion consists in their believing a lie, which was the cause of the fall and ruin of our whole race, and which is now the cause, and the sole cause, why all those to whom the gospel comes are not saved by it; for their believing a lie is stated as the same thing as their not believing the truth, or not receiving the love of the truth that they might be saved, 2 Thess. ii. 10—12. The condemnation of such is represented as proceeding upon this ground alone, because their not receiving the truth is a positive rejection of that salvation which God, in infinite mercy, provided for our fallen race; and those who will not accept of deliverance from the guilt and punishment of their sins in this way, will never find another way. Thus, in strong and decisive language, Christ

himself declares the truth of the case: "For God sent not his Son into the world, to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved." But Christ never proposed to save any man against his will, or any man who continued to dishonour God by disbelieving the word of his Son. Therefore, he continues,—"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," John iii. 17—19. Their loving darkness rather than light is the same thing as their preferring the devil's lie to God's truth; and the reason is, the lie allows them to live in sin, while the truth would turn them from it. Their deeds are evil, they have pleasure in unrighteousness, therefore they hate the truth that is holy in its nature, and which produces holiness in all that embrace it.

It is the devil's old and original lie, by which he still deceives the world, for it is doubtful if he could ever make another equal to it, and while he gets the world to continue to believe it, there is scarcely another necessary for his purpose. It was, Though you disobey God, ye shall not surely die: and it is now, Though you live in sin, ye shall not

surely die; that is, ye shall not perish for ever; by some means or other you shall escape condemnation; and if you cannot find a way of escape for yourself, the church will do it for you; the priest will absolve you at the hour of death; and though you should go to purgatory for a time, he will, for a stipulated price, insure your ultimate and safe arrival in heaven. This, I confess, has the appearance of placing the subject in a light horribly ludicrous. But it is horribly true. There is nothing exaggerated in this view of the character of Popery, and not one feature of the picture distorted.

In his concluding letter, Dr. Milner introduces some great Protestant names, as admitting "that salvation may be found in the communion of the original Catholic church: but no divine of this church," says he, "consistently with her characteristic unity, and the constant doctrine of the holy fathers and of Scripture itself, as I have elsewhere demonstrated, can allow that salvation is to be found out of this communion, except in the case of invincible ignorance," p. 197. I never knew before that salvation was to be found any where by *invincible ignorance*. This, I believe, is the highest commendation of ignorance that ever was penned, for the advantage of possessing it must be immense, seeing it is the only faculty by which salvation can be found, without submitting to the

intolerable bondage of Rome? Who would ever desire to acquire knowledge after this?

But my design in quoting this passage is to show how the church of Rome glories in that which ought to be her shame; that is, her stern, exclusive, sectarian spirit. It is to her narrow pale that Dr. Milner applies the words "original catholic church," though he knows that Protestant divines attach a very different meaning to the words. But, admitting them in this sense, few Protestants, I suppose, will deny the possibility of salvation to men in communion with the church of Rome. For my part, I believe that salvation is not only possible but certain, to every man in that and every other church, who believes in Christ and turns from sin to holiness; and I doubt not this has taken place in numerous instances, by means of some part of the word of God, read or heard by individuals in communion with the church of Rome, notwithstanding the monstrous corruption of that church, and her extensively organized opposition to the truth. The Lord knoweth them that are his every where, and as he preserved a few Jews in Babylon from the rage of their enemies, so he can preserve alive the souls that trust in him, even in antichristian Babylon. The very command, "Come out of her, my people," Rev. xviii. 4, which is as much in force as ever, implies that some of the Lord's people may still be in her, and that

they are where they ought not to be. Such persons are saved, not *because* they are in the church of Rome, but in *spite of it*, through the abounding mercy of our God and Saviour.

But, instead of imitating the Christian charity of Protestants, who believe that persons *in* the church of Rome may be saved, Dr. Milner, and I suppose all Papists, triumph in maintaining the principle that there is no possibility of being saved *out* of her communion, except in the case of "invincible ignorance," which of itself makes salvation impossible; for ignorance cannot be called invincible till knowledge has been presented and rejected, and then it incurs, on its own account, the condemnation of not receiving the truth.

But this exclusion from salvation of all who are out of the church of Rome is not all, nor even the worst of the system. The more dangerous and destructive principle is, that all who are within that church shall certainly be saved, in virtue of their being there, and their participating of her rites, whatever may be their personal character. To teach that a man will be saved in virtue of his belonging to any church, without being personally united to Christ by faith, and renewed by his Spirit, is to encourage presumption and immorality. This was the error of the carnal Jews, who thought all was well because Abraham was their father, and they were of

the stock of Israel, which was the true church at the time. But, as Paul told them afterwards, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly" only; so he is not a Christian who is merely one outwardly; that is, who has no more than an external visible relation to a Christian church, though it were as holy as that of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. This means a new creation to holiness by the Spirit of God, and a turning away from sin. But the church of Rome teaches that being in her communion, and receiving her sacraments, makes salvation perfectly secure. Thus persons who will not forsake their sins are flattered with the delusive hope that they shall be saved: and supposing it to be true that many Protestants, in the prospect of death, seek to be reconciled to the church of Rome, this is enough to account for it. Wherever the Protestant religion is established, or generally prevalent, there will be found many who assume the name, and pass for Protestants, who live very wicked lives, and in consequence they feel themselves miserable in the prospect of death and judgment. If they would apply to Christ, even in the last hour, he would not cast them out; but such persons have no distinct apprehension of the gospel plan of salvation, and what is worse, they have no heart to it. They will not submit to the righteous-

ness of God, and embrace the truth which brings, as the free gift of infinite mercy, salvation from sin, as well as from its punishment. It is not salvation from sin that they want, they desire only exemption from punishment; and this is what the gospel does not promise without salvation from sin itself, that is, without sanctification—a new heart, and a new life. Such persons as I am speaking of cannot endure this; but their misery may be increasing; they turn away from the word of God, for they find it is all against them; but the church of Rome presents a remedy which she assures them is of sovereign efficacy. It is—Be reconciled to the church. Her baptism will most certainly regenerate you. Her sacraments are effectual means of salvation. Her priests will absolve you from your sins. At the hour of death, they will anoint you with holy oil, and give you a passport from this world to the next, which will make your salvation absolutely certain. The priests are so sure of this, that they pledge their own salvation upon it, as the duke of Brunswick says they did to him, and promised to take his damnation on themselves, if he should be damned. *See his Fifty Reasons*, No. 50. Now, it is by no means wonderful that persons who reject the salvation of the gospel, and who cannot part with their sins, should be left, in righteous judgment, to believe this lie. They lay hold of it, as drowning persons do of a

straw. Thus their conscience is pacified. They attend to every prescribed form, and observe all the rites of the church, expecting that by these they shall be saved, while living in sin, with their hearts at enmity against God. The delusion is so fascinating, that, instead of being surprised that some carnally minded Protestants should embrace it, the surprise is that there are so few.

I shall illustrate these things by an example, of recent occurrence, which shows how closely the priests lie in wait to get dying Protestants reconciled to the church, which they maintain insures their salvation, though so ill as to be unconscious of what is done.

The following are the affidavits which the Reverend warden Daly found it necessary to publish, in justification of his own character, which was so insidiously and grossly attacked; and to prove to the world of what description the spirit of *modern* Popery is.

County of the Town of Galway, to wit. } James Daly, of the town of Galway, clerk, maketh oath and saith, that he has been eleven years and upwards warden of the collegiate church of St. Nicholas, in said town; that during the whole of that time he has known Bartholomew Halliday to be a member of the established church, and, as

long as he was able, a constant attendant at Divine service, and the supper of the Lord. That about three years ago, the said Halliday received a hurt, which confined him entirely to his room: that during the latter period, he was regularly attended by deponent as a minister, and regularly received the sacrament at his own request, along with Thomas Blakely, a friend of his; that in many of these occasions he did repeatedly, impressively, and with considerable agitation, supplicate deponent to prevent him from being tormented in his dying moments by a Roman Catholic priest; that having been visited by deponent about ten days before his death, he said to deponent, "Oh, sir, I wish I was out of this place!" giving deponent to understand that he was surrounded with bigots, and would not be allowed to die in peace; that deponent pledged himself to protect him from any unwarrantable intrusion; that at ten o'clock in the night of Wednesday, the 6th instant, or Monday the 4th, (does not perfectly recollect which of the two,) deponent visited the said Halliday; that he found him so weak in intellect, being ninety years of age, and at the close of a long illness, that he scrupled to administer the sacrament to him, until asked to do so by himself; that then and there deponent did administer to said Halliday the Lord's supper, with the aforesaid Thomas Blakely; that in the morning

of Friday, the 8th instant, a man of the name of John Reilly called at his house, and informed him, by a message, that Bartholomew Halliday was just speechless, and wished to have deponent with him when he was dying; that deponent gave some answer that he would call upon him; that he accordingly did so at half-past twelve o'clock; that he found him breathing with the utmost difficulty; that his eyes were closed; that he was reduced to the lowest state of imbecility, bodily and mental; that he was, in deponent's opinion, utterly and absolutely incapable of understanding, adopting, or satisfactorily assenting to, any new profession of faith; that, in deponent's opinion, he was equally incapable of calling any person out of the next room; that deponent, standing close to his bed, and asking if he wanted anything, thought he heard him pronounce the word water; that deponent went, accompanied by Halliday's grand-daughter, to the church; gave her some wine; desired her to give it, mixed with water, to her grandfather; and promised to return, and say over him the departing prayer of the church of England; that deponent was just setting out to do so at about ten minutes past four o'clock; that he was met by a female parishioner of his, who told him that the women of the house had sent for a priest for Bartholomew Halliday; and that, when she heard them doing so, she

came off for deponent; that deponent walked fast to Halliday's room; that he found a priest at Halliday's bedside; that deponent paused at the door, unseen by the priest; that he was not administering any of the rites of the Latin church; that he heard him distinctly ask Halliday, "Do you choose to die a Catholic?" that before any answer could be given by his gasping parishioner, deponent interfered; that he strongly remonstrated with the priest upon the impropriety of torturing an unoffending man, and leading the deluded people about him to suppose that the great work of conversion to God could take place under such circumstances; that the priest said he was sent for; that deponent flatly denied his being sent for by Halliday, and stooped down to speak to the dying man; that the priest pushed himself between them, exclaiming, "Ours is the ancient religion, we can absolve you from your sins," and other similar expressions; that it was in answer to them and such like expressions, only, that deponent frequently said, "Bartholomew Halliday, that's a lie;" that the priest did then prepare himself to administer extreme unction; that being under a promise to his helpless parishioner, and now his only protector, deponent felt himself called upon to prevent, by every lawful means, the torture so long and so justly apprehended; that he *did* break the bottle of

water; that he *did* extinguish the candles; that he *did* fling himself on the bed, between the priest and his parishioner, (to prevent the anointing;) that he was then laid hold of by some women; that his great-coat was torn; that he was forcibly dragged from the bed of his parishioner; that the impression upon the minds of these infatuated women seemed to deponent obviously to be, that whatever Halliday might be, till within a few hours of death, that if the priest was in time to read his absolution over him, all would be well in an eternal world; and deponent is sorry to be obliged solemnly to swear that the priest did (more than once, after anointing Halliday) fully countenance this strong delusion, by exclaiming, in the most positive manner, "He's a Catholic, and his soul is saved;" that deponent, while dragged by the women, snatched the priest's book, in which he was reading Latin, out of his hands; that he then challenged the priest, if he was indeed a minister of God, to kneel down without his book, and say one prayer in English, suited to the circumstances of the dying sinner; and that if he did so, deponent was satisfied to quit the room; that the priest was irritated at this proposal; that he began to rave against Luther and the Reformation; that he repeatedly called the Protestant religion a diabolical religion; that he told the deponent

that he could crush him under his feet; that a woman, of the name of Mary Cox, entered the room; that, seeing deponent's situation, she ran for Mr. James Forster; that when Mr. James Forster came in, deponent requested him to send for the mayor; that the priest, seeing two policemen enter, quitted deponent, and commenced an altercation with them; that deponent did then lean over his poor parishioner, saying, "Bartholomew Halliday, shall I pray with you?" that "Yes, sir," was answered by him; that deponent knelt in prayer; that Halliday repeated after him the Lord's prayer, and a part of the confession; that the mayor knocked at the door; that the priest began, and continued for some time, to justify his conduct; that deponent requested the mayor to ask the dying man which clergyman he chose to have; that the mayor, after some hesitation, stooped down, and said to Halliday, "Do you choose to have Mr. Daly the priest, or warden Daly?" that Halliday, in deponent's hearing, answered, "Warden Daly;" and that the mayor acknowledged that he did. Warden Ffrench, the Roman Catholic warden, being in the room, the priest complained loudly, that deponent had called him a liar; that deponent said to him, in warden Ffrench's presence, that he was obliged by his principles to declare, that every man who inculcated religious falsehood was a liar, and

under the influence of the father of lies; and that it was in that sense only that he ever made use of the expression; that warden Ffrench seemed satisfied with the explanation; that the sheriff now entered the room, and a new altercation commenced; that during the altercation, deponent sat upon Halliday's bed, and repeated to him passages of Scripture; that warden Ffrench and the sheriff now advanced to ask him which clergyman he chose to have; that deponent did then retire from Halliday's bed-side to make room for warden Ffrench and the sheriff; that the sheriff asked Halliday, "Do you choose the minister or the priest?" that in answer to this question, deponent's poor parishioner gave utterance to a sound which was partly an articulation of the tongue, and partly a rattle of the throat; that the sheriff and the persons near the bed exclaimed, "He says the minister;" that warden Ffrench protested he did not hear it; that the sheriff again asked the same question; that Halliday uttered the same heart-sickening kind of sound; that the sheriff and the persons about cried out, "Now he says the priest;" that Halliday's grand-daughter now came in; that she appeared surprised at what happened; that she went up to her grandfather's bed, and asked him who he would have; that she says he answered, "warden Daly, warden Daly;"

that deponent, disgusted at the uproar and confusion about him, and at the cruel treatment of his parishioner, requested Mr. Forster to kneel down with him in prayer; that they knelt close to Halliday; that as soon as deponent opened his lips, Halliday followed him, and said a distinct "Amen," to deponent's petitions; that deponent called upon Mr. Forster to observe him; that Mr. Forster said he did observe him; that when the priest heard deponent say, "We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep," he loudly interrupted him, saying, "Indeed you have erred and strayed, and grossly;" that the priest then began to read out of his book, in a strong voice; that after some time thus spent, the mayor said that he thought both clergymen ought to leave the room; that the priest stopped, and consented to do so; that deponent did so too, after putting up a prayer (for his own sake and the sake of those around him) that the Lord would be pleased to kill and crucify, in his own way, any angry or wrong feeling that might arise out of the scene that had occurred; that before deponent got off his knees, warden Ffrench said that he and the priest ought to shake hands; that deponent said, "Oh! surely, I will kiss his hand, to show him that I have no personal animosity to him;" that deponent, having done so, rose and quitted the room, (about seven o'clock in the after-

noon:) deponent does solemnly swear, that he did not call the Catholic religion mummery, nor speak disrespectfully of its ministers in general; that it was only the horrid and deluding scene then and there exhibited, that he called, and always will call, mummery; and that it was the conduct of the unhappy persons concerned in it, that he loudly, and, as he conceives, justly, reproached.

JAMES DALY.

Sworn before me in the Tholsel of Galway, this 25th day of March, 1822.

JAMES O'HARA, jun., Recorder.

[Then follow several other affidavits, confirming the above statement.]

SECTION XXIV.

MY last section contained an account of a *fracas* which took place in Ireland, in March last, between two priests, the one a Protestant, the other a Papist, occasioned by a dispute whether an old man should be suffered to die, as he had lived, a Protestant, or whether he should be converted to Popery? In this battle, as in every other, much damage was sustained on both sides. The narrative in my last section is given in the form of an affidavit by the Protestant clergyman; and it is confirmed by several other affidavits, which I do not think it necessary to insert.

Peter Daly, the Popish priest, has not, so

far as I have seen, published any account of the affair in his own name. But there is a letter by him in the "Warder," Dublin newspaper, of March 30th, in which he complains grievously of the misrepresentations of the other party. He says—"The principles of Catholicity are a sufficient refutation of the assertion that I forced my attendance on the unwilling individual. According to the doctrine of my church, sacred things are not to be administered except to those who are willing and well-disposed; and it betrays an ignorance of the sacred responsibilities of the priesthood, to suppose that a Catholic clergyman would desert his duty, even with the risk of his life." He publishes along with this letter six affidavits, which do not materially contradict those on the Protestant side, farther than that John Reilly swears that the dying man desired him to bring "a *Catholic* priest." At the same time the deponent says, when Halliday first spoke of his bringing a priest, he thought he "was raving or delirious;" and "asked him two or three times, whether it was a Protestant or a Catholic clergyman he wished to have?" In this condition it is very evident that the dying man was not capable of giving a distinct answer to the question, or conscious of what he was saying; and allowing that his tongue unconsciously expressed the words "Catholic priest," this could have no weight with any

rational man, when it was opposed by the whole tenor of a life of ninety years, during which he professed a firm adherence to the Protestant religion, and an abhorrence of Popery; yet this is all the foundation that this priest had, according to the oath of his own witness, for considering the dying man "willing and well-disposed" to the rites of his church.

An affidavit is given on the same side by the Popish warden Ffrench, in which he swears as follows:—Some doubts having arisen as to the religion of said Halliday; and he and the said mayor were deputed to ask the said Halliday what clergyman he wished to have, when said Halliday distinctly declared he wished to have *the* priest; upon which it was acknowledged and acquiesced in by the said mayor, that Halliday had called for '*a* priest.'" This is the only farther evidence of the poor man's being "*willing* and well disposed" to be converted to Popery; and every one acquainted with the nature of evidence must see, that here there is no evidence at all. All that is sworn to by this witness is, that the dying man wished to have the priest; but in the feeble state of his mind, this might designate the Protestant as well as the Popish clergyman; and what the mayor is said to have acknowledged is, that Halliday called merely for *a* priest. Mr. Ffrench's affidavit, therefore, proves that Halliday did

not call for the "Catholic" priest; for if he had, Ffrench would not have omitted to say so, seeing that was the very thing which his brother priest wished to prove by his testimony.

This priest adopts a truly Popish way of rebutting the accusation contained in the Protestant priest's affidavit:—"The principles of Catholicity are a sufficient refutation of the assertion, that I forced my attendance on the unwilling individual," etc. He wishes the world to believe that his personal conduct could not be wrong, because the principles of his church are right: as if a man accused of murder were to argue—The Divine law, which I believe, is a sufficient refutation of the charge, for it is written, "Thou shalt do no murder." It is not, however, worth while to dwell on this subject, considered merely as the improper conduct of an individual; and if this were the subject of discussion, we should have only to express our abhorrence, and have done with it. But it illustrates the system of Popery, which teaches that a man may live in sin, even in heresy, which is the greatest of all sins in Popish estimation, and continue in this state till his senses are so far gone that he cannot express a coherent sentiment, or even articulate an audible word; and yet, by the mystic spell of holy water and holy oil, a priest can reconcile him to the church, and save his soul! The first thing

that strikes one in reading such an account as that in my last section, is the horrible barbarity of tormenting a poor dying man with their teasing intreaties to submit to those rites which he had abhorred during his whole life, and when he had not strength to resist, or so much as to protest against them. But this is little in comparison of the fiend-like malignity of deceiving men in health, by teaching them that, live as they will, the priests can save them in their last moments. This is the quintessence of Satanic imposture and delusion. My private correspondence from Ireland apprised me long ago, that the priests were constantly on the watch to ensnare dying Protestants in the manner described in the case of poor Halliday; but I did not expect to see such a public exhibition of it, of so recent a date as the spring of the present year; for the priests are as artful in concealing as in practising their works of darkness.* The above case, interesting and shocking as it is, will be little known, even in Ireland; for most of the newspapers are in

* Since this section was sent to the printer, I have received a letter from a respectable correspondent, containing a narrative of similar cruelty and imposition practised upon an old woman in the north of Scotland, who, in her dying moments, after resisting to the utmost of her feeble strength, had the sacrament forced down her throat. "This took place in Scotland," says my correspondent, "and was well known in the country round at the time; and it shows that the genius, the spirit, and the practice of Popery are the same wherever it has power."

the Popish interest, and carefully guarded against the admission of anything prejudicial to the cause. But for the "Antidote" and the "Warder," two papers lately established in Dublin, for the purpose of upholding the constitution and Protestant interest, I should probably never have heard of the story, which was originally published in a remote provincial journal near the place where it happened.

The rage of the day—for every period has its particular rage—is "conciliation." It is a good word; but in all ages the worst things have been introduced under the best names; and thus they got possession of the human mind before their true nature was detected. Protestants, especially our Protestant legislature, have made many concessions to Papists, with a view to conciliate them, within the last fifty years. But they are at this day farther from the point they aimed at than ever they were. Papists have never conceded one iota to us; and they tell us plainly that they will not, and cannot concede any thing; for theirs is the ancient church, which was unjustly dispossessed of its power and property by Protestants; and all our concessions to them—all our attempts at conciliation—have only given them a standing ground to annoy us by demanding restoration of their lost power and possessions. This they are doing at this day most clamorously, and with the

most virulent abuse of the English and their government; and while Protestants, in their simplicity, are dreaming that their attempts at conciliation will produce blessed effects in the next age, when their children will be regarded as brothers by the Papists of that day the Popish priests in Ireland are sowing the seeds of more fell discord and deadly hostility against Protestants, than any thing else that the present age has witnessed, or that can easily enter into the mind of men of Christian temper and feeling.

[Farther on the author says what will be an appropriate close to this work.]

The true religion has in all ages been opposed by error, idolatry, and superstition. The enmity of the seed of the serpent against the Seed of the woman has not been suspended for a single day since the time of Cain and Abel; and he who was a liar from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, has never ceased to oppose the truth, or to pervert it, or to conceal it by substituting something in its place, or by any means to divert the minds of men from it, lest they should believe and be saved. This opposition to the truth has been carried on in various forms, and under different names; but the general character of it has been substantially the same in all ages. It was reserved, however, for the last age of the world, or the New

Testament dispensation, to exhibit it in a more systematic and organized form than it had been at any former period; and to effect its object more insidiously than before, by assuming the name of Christianity, and under that sacred name, to teach and practise all the idolatry and immorality of the ancient heathen.

ADDENDA (A.)

THERE is nothing that appears more clearly in the Bible, than that it is addressed to all, and that it ought to be accessible to all. The command of God was to Jacob, or Israel, (for the words are used indifferently for the church of God,) to make known the testimony and the law; that is, not only to publish it, but to teach it diligently. Every father in Israel was commanded to teach it to his children; this supposes that every family had access to it, in a language which they understood. The same thing applies to the Scriptures of the New Testament, for they were written for the purpose of being made publicly known. We read much of the benefit which results from a knowledge of the word of God, of its dwelling in us richly, of being filled with the knowledge of his will, and of making the Holy Scriptures the subject of our daily meditation. But nowhere do we read in the Bible that the word of God does mischief, that the reading of it is dangerous, and that it ought to be kept from the common people.

Thus, I think, it appears evidently the will of God, that the Bible should be published to all the world, and that it should be accessible to all men. But the council of

Trent has decreed otherwise, as the council of Toulouse did before it. These bodies were, in effect, the same as the church of Rome; they acted in name of the whole church, and, with the pope at their head, they gave forth their decrees as the infallible dictates of the Holy Ghost. Modern Papists do not deny the doctrine: nay, they publicly maintain what was solemnly decreed by the said councils, particularly that of Trent, that the indiscriminate reading of the word of God does more harm than good. Thus they prove themselves in opposition to the will of God, and to belong to that antichrist who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.

I engaged to prove the point from the writings of living Papists; take, therefore, the following from the "Orthodox Journal." "It must be acknowledged, Mr. Editor, that such a plan for propagating Christianity" (that is, by distributing the Bible) "was totally unknown to past ages, and had escaped the notice of Him who was Wisdom itself, the co-eternal Son of God, the Author and Founder of Christianity. For we nowhere find it recorded that the Son of God, before he ascended into heaven, either wrote down, or commanded to be written, the doctrines which he delivered for the instruction of mankind. He adopted the plain and simple method of verbal instruction; and, when about

to leave this world, charged a chosen few, whom he had selected from his followers, to pursue the same plan, and preach, by word of mouth, the truths which they had received from him, no mention being made of distributing Bibles. Accordingly, we find the apostles, in obedience to this Divine commission, immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost, boldly announcing to mankind, by word of mouth, the truths of religion.

"Such was the method by which the Christian religion was first established and propagated, at least if Scripture and church history speak the truth. Our Bible-men of the nineteenth century may, perhaps, think that it would have been much more wise in the Founder of Christianity to have furnished each of the apostles, before his setting out upon his mission, with a knapsack well filled with Bibles, to be distributed among the towns and villages through which they were to pass. It must be confessed, that the Bible-distributing scheme, *if it added to the burdens*, would have considerably lessened the labours, of the apostles, and would certainly have freed them from one care, that of providing themselves with successors, as in this scheme none were likely to be wanting. However, from the most authentic monuments, it is clear that no such plan for the propagation of Christianity was then adopted, but the plain

simple method above mentioned, of appointing a set of men to deliver the truths of the Christian religion, by word of mouth, with an injunction upon the rest of mankind of hearing and receiving the truths thus delivered.

"Indeed, Mr. Editor, our Bible-men ought to know that the books composing the New Testament, which is the part of Scripture which chiefly regards us Christians, were not all written till nearly a century after Christianity had been announced to the world. What, then, (I put this question to the Bible-men) what was the guide to faith, or the rule of faith, during that period? Not the Old Testament, for this would have left Christians in the dark as to the very first and most important articles of their belief. Not the New Testament, for this was not yet composed, nor consequently known, but in part, and that to a very small portion of believers. Most undoubtedly, sir, the only rule of faith then known and universally received, was the preaching of the apostles and their lawful successors. Every doctrine conformable to their preaching was acknowledged to be of Divine authority; while every doctrine, whether written or unwritten, contrary to their preaching, was rejected as spurious. When a dispute arose among the faithful respecting the obligation of observing the Mosaic law, was either the Bible or any

other written authority referred to as the rule of faith? No; the living voice of the pastors of the church was consulted; the apostles assembled in council at Jerusalem, and the affair was terminated by the decision of those who were, by Divine institution, the teachers and guardians of the faith. It is by a similar appeal to the living tribunal of the pastors of the church that, in every succeeding age, 'the doctrines once delivered to the saints' have been preserved from all mixture of error and human invention. This is the only rule of faith which the Scriptures themselves hold out to us, and to which they enjoin implicit obedience, under pain of exclusion from the kingdom of heaven, with heathens and publicans, in case of disobedience.

"Reason itself, Mr. Editor, tells us that the Scriptures, left to private interpretation, cannot possibly form an unerring rule of faith and morals. To assert that the Almighty has left us his sacred word to be our sole guide in matters of religion, and, at the same time, given authority to every individual to put upon this word whatever interpretation his private judgment, or want of judgment, suggests, is to convert the God of truth into a god of contradiction and falsehood, and to make the Deity responsible for all the errors, blasphemies, and absurdities of every heretic and fanatic, from the days of Ebion and

Cerinthus to Ann Lee, the Shaker, and Johanna Southcote, the raving prophetess of the present day. What, then, is the conclusion to be drawn from the above observations? Clearly this, that the Bible-distributing scheme was not the method appointed by Christ for the propagation of Christianity, and, consequently, that the Bible societies are preferring the folly of man before the wisdom of God." — *Orthodox Journal*, vol. ii., pp. 15—17.

Perhaps some apology is due to my readers for putting so much blasphemy and nonsense in my pages; but I did not know any other way by which I could so effectually expose the hatred with which modern Papists regard the Bible, and their opposition to the general circulation of the word of God. There is no occasion to go to the bulls of popes and the canons of councils to prove that Papists are hostile to the free circulation of the Scriptures; their writings in the present day convict them. They do, therefore, prove themselves to be opposed to the authority of God, who has commanded his word to be made known to every creature.

If it shall be alleged, that the editor of the "Orthodox Journal" is too contemptible to be cited as an authority in this or any matter connected with religion, I answer, that this will readily be admitted by every Protestant who reads his writings; but he is by no

means a contemptible person in the esteem of his own sect. He is praised in a high degree by most of his correspondents, who are unceasingly commending his excellent work. It will be recollected, that the very correspondent from whose letters I have quoted so largely in this number, puffs him off as a man who understands the subject of religion better than prophets and apostles did, and knows much better how to teach it; for which see the conclusion of my thirty-first section. In fact, he is the champion, if not the oracle, of modern Papists, especially of those who resist the veto; and his writings are highly commended by the bishop of Castabala, the vicar apostolic of the midland district.

Now, this said editor and his correspondents have set themselves down to revile those who are labouring to give the poor the word of God, and they do not scruple to vilify the Bible itself. It is quite fair to consider them as expressing the sentiments of their brethren in general, unless some other writer of equal authority with bishop Milner and Mr. Gandolphy, and the other correspondents of the "Orthodox Journal," shall come forward and publicly disavow such sentiments. Such disavowal has not been made by any Popish writer in England or Ireland, so far as I know; and as they are well known to be in general hostile to the

circulation of the Bible alone, they may be presumed to hold the same sentiments with the writer above quoted.

This writer asserts, that the Scriptures alone, that is, simply as they were given by the Almighty, *cannot possibly be an unerring rule of faith and morals*, which is asserting plainly, that the word of God cannot accomplish the object intended by it without human aid. Nay, from what follows, it is insinuated that it will do incalculable mischief if left to be privately interpreted; and the writer has the presumption to say, that this mischief will be chargeable against God himself, if he shall permit his word to be generally read, and to be at the mercy of ignorant and perverse interpreters. No Protestant ever taught that the Almighty has given authority to every man, or to any man, to put upon his word whatever interpretation he pleases. He has given a revelation of his will sufficiently intelligible for the salvation of the guilty, and the instruction of the simple; and persons to whom this revelation is made known by reading the Bible are in no danger of misunderstanding it, if they really desire to understand it, and pray for Divine instruction; for God has promised his Spirit to guide into all truth. The words of God "are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge," Prov. viii. 9. Such a knowledge of them as is connected with salvation

is the fruit of Divine teaching. Under such teaching, the poor and illiterate, by means of the Bible, are made wise unto salvation. Without such teaching, the holy father of Rome, with all his army of cardinals, priests, and doctors, are no better than mere fools who hate knowledge. "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you," Prov. i. 22, 23. This is a public proclamation of the Author of the Bible. He requires it to be made known to all, without any consideration of the danger of misunderstanding it; and he will secure against such danger by giving his Spirit, and making known his word, to all who apply their hearts to such knowledge.

ADDENDA (B.)

THE last named author (Mr. Andrews*) has repeatedly challenged me, in his "Catholic Vindicator," to tell him how I come to know the Bible to be the word of God; and the train of his reasoning, if such it can be called, is, to show that no man can know this but upon the authority of the church of Rome.

* [A Roman Catholic, who wrote to the Editor of "The Protestant." —ED.]

This holy church, it seems, claims the power of deciding infallibly what is the word of God, and what is not; or, which comes nearly to the same thing, she alone has power and authority to declare the true meaning of the Scriptures. In her infallible wisdom she pretends to prove from the Bible that she possesses this authority, and yet the Bible itself has no authority or meaning but what she is pleased to allow it; which exemplifies the absurdity of proving a thing by itself, or two things mutually by one another. Juvenis is entitled to an apology for classing him with such a writer as Mr. Andrews, whose name as an author is not worthy to appear on the same page; but as they are agreed in maintaining the insufficiency of the Bible, which I hold to be virtually the same thing as rejecting its inspiration, I shall, before entering upon another general topic of discussion, devote a number or two to the answering of the question, how I know the Bible to be the word of God? I shall first, however, give the challenge itself, in the words of the Vindicator, from different parts of his work.

"As the accuser," says he, meaning "THE PROTESTANT," "speaks positively to the Scriptures containing the word of God, will he permit me to inquire of him how he came by the information, and upon what authority he grounds his assertion? Has *he* been taken into the council of the Almighty, that

he should know more of his will than other men?" (so it seems other men do not know that the Bible contains the word of God!) "Has *he* been favoured with a revelation from heaven in his private ear? Or has a heavenly messenger been sent to *him*, to inform him that the Bible *is* actually the word of God?" *Cath. Vind.* col. 233. Some of these expressions had been used by me when inquiring how the Popish priests came to know the mind of God better than other men, *independently of the Bible;* and here the Vindicator makes use of my words to inquire how I came to know the truth of the Bible itself, from which it is evident that, in his opinion, there is no way of knowing it but by the authority of his church, or by means of a private communication by an angelic messenger sent from heaven.

The author introduces a long extract from his infallible oracle Dr. Milner, intended to show that Protestants cannot be certain with regard to any book in the Bible that it is genuine. The extract concludes thus:— "Granting, for example, that St. Paul wrote an inspired epistle to the Romans, and another to the Ephesians, yet, as the former was intrusted to an individual, the deaconess Phebe, to be conveyed by her to its destination, (Rom. xvi., see Calmet, etc.,) and the latter to his disciple, Tychicus, (Eph. vi. 21,) for the same purpose, it is impossible for you

to entertain a rational conviction that these epistles, as they stand in your Testament, are exactly in the state in which they issued from the apostle's pen, or that they are his genuine epistles at all, without recurring to the tradition and authority of the Catholic church concerning them," *Ibid*, col. 237. This is an argument truly worthy of a Popish vicar apostolic and bishop of the nineteenth century. Supposing Phebe to have been the bearer of the epistle to the Romans, and supposing her to have been sufficiently well acquainted with Greek learning, and such an expert penwoman as to imitate the hand-writing of Tertius in the body of the epistle, and of Paul in the salutation, so as to deceive the Christians in Rome, it may be asked, what motive she could have to make her practise such imposition? The venerable vicar apostolic means to insinuate, that for any thing we Protestants know, this said Phebe destroyed Paul's epistle, or having by accident lost it on the way, wrote one out of her own head, and palmed it upon the Christians in Rome as the genuine writing of the apostle, and that this is what we have in our New Testaments at this day! And truly if it were so, I would say that Phebe was a greater woman than the virgin Mary, or any other woman that ever appeared in the world. But this is an argument, which, from its extreme absurdity, it is difficult to answer

If we were to allow the bishop's doubts in such a case as this to have any weight, we could not be sure of the genuineness of any writing; we could not put faith in written documents of any kind. But to proceed with the "Catholic Vindicator:"—

"By what private stamp," says he, "or mark, does THE PROTESTANT learn that the Bible is the word of God? By what influence, and by what means, can he ascertain the accuracy of the Scriptures, but on the *testimony of others*, on the *traditions* of men, as he himself admits in the passage I have before quoted; unless, indeed, as I observed in a former Vindicator, he can show that he has been favoured with a copy from some heavenly messenger, in which case he would do well to present it to the Bible society, for general distribution, with his own authenticated signature." *Cath. Vind.* col. 261. Here the Vindicator introduces me as admitting that I could not ascertain the accuracy of the Scriptures, but on the testimony of others—on the traditions of men; and he professes to refer to my own words, which he had before quoted, as containing such admission; but he takes care not to refer to any page of his own work or mine in which such words are to be found; and the fact is, I never admitted any such thing. I do not reject human testimony in weighing what are called the *external* evidences of the authenticity of

the Scriptures; but no words of mine express, or even imply, such an admission as that which the Vindicator asserts; and this is one of the numberless impositions which he was pleased to practise upon his readers, in order to defend a cause which cannot be defended without having recourse to falsehood and imposition.

The hostility of Papists against the Bible will appear more evidently from the following extract. I had asserted that the Bible contains a complete revelation of the will of God for the salvation of our fallen race; that it contains a proclamation of grace and pardon to the very chief of sinners; and that it ought to be accessible to all men. To this the Vindicator, after quoting our Lord's words ("Go teach all nations," etc., Mat. xxviii. 19, 20) replies:—"Now here is no intimation of *reading* in these words of our Saviour, nor can THE PROTESTANT discover that the Son of God ever *wrote* his Divine precepts previous to sending the apostles on their commission. Upon what grounds then can he fairly establish his position, that the *Bible* was intended to be *accessible to all men?* It was not accessible to all the Israelites; it was not accessible to all the Gentiles; it was not accessible to all the primitive Christians; it is not accessible to *all* men at the present day; nor will it be accessible to *all* men in future ages, notwithstanding the active but

ill-judged labours of the Bible Societies to disseminate it. 'For,' says an article in *The Times* London Newspaper, of the 9th of April last, 'it is a curious fact, that, supposing the British and Foreign Bible Society were to distribute as many copies of the Scriptures *each year* as they have done during the last *twelve years*, wherein 1,675,994 copies have been circulated, it would still take *four centuries* to supply each individual in the world with a copy; and this is taking it for granted that the inhabitants of the countries called Christian are already supplied.' By this," says the Vindicator, "the reader will see the groundlessness of the charge of *withholding* the Bible from the people, brought by THE PROTESTANT against the church of Rome, seeing that it is an act of impossibility to supply all men with copies of it were she so inclined. Consequently, if restricting those from reading the Bible who are likely to *pervert* the sense of it to their *own destruction*, which is all the fathers of the council of Trent meditated, in the before-mentioned decree, be 'the same thing as granting permission to creatures to *hear* what the Almighty *speaks* to them;' if the *Bible* contains 'a *complete* revelation of his will for the salvation of our fallen race;' if 'it is a *proclamation* of grace and pardon to the very chief of sinners;' (what nonsense!) God himself must stand accused by THE PROTESTANT of denying the

use of the Bible to the common people, and preventing 'fallen and miserable creatures from hearing what he says to them,' which I apprehend comes nearer to blasphemy than the words of my correspondent before alluded to, seeing he has ordained that the greater portion of mankind, from the creation to the present day, have been, are now, and will be deprived of the supposed blessing of *reading* this wonderful Protestant *panacea*, not only from their inability to procure a copy, but also from the want of a knowledge of letters." *Cath. Vind.* col. 240.

The above are the sentiments of the champion whom our Glasgow Papists engaged to defend them against the exposure which THE PROTESTANT was making of their anti-christian principles. They must, of course, be held as the sentiments of our Papists themselves until they disavow them. This is a fair specimen of Mr. Andrews' mode of reasoning. He has scarcely a paragraph that contains better logic. I shall not analyze the passage at present, but I request such of my readers as have leisure to try what they can make out of it. One thing appears certain, upon the very face of it, that the circulation and general reading of the Bible is regarded with dread and abhorrence by our modern Papists, whatever some credulous Glasgow Protestants may say to the contrary.

I shall give an extract or two more from

the Vindicator before I proceed to a particular reply; but I am afraid some of my readers will regard these quotations, which speak in such terms of the Holy Scriptures, as no better than the filth of the inquisition, with which I have lately treated them *ad nauseam*. I had said that the apostles committed to writing what was dictated by the Holy Ghost, and that the word of God thus written they threw upon the world, and the providence of Him who gave it, to supply the place of their voice after they should be dead. To this the Vindicator replies:—"Now, the transactions here related must have occurred near eighteen hundred years ago; but what other evidence of his senses can THE PROTESTANT produce, as a voucher for this statement, than the Papist for his belief in transubstantiation?" THE PROTESTANT never spoke of the evidence of his senses in this matter, but the Vindicator assumes that he did, and proceeds upon the false assumption. "Did he *see* the Holy Spirit guide the pens of the writers? What evidence of his senses has he to produce, that the apostles wrote the books of the New Testament, or that they were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? A Bible is placed before him, which in itself is a mere book; *how* then does he know that it is a Divine book? I have shown that this book is liable to be corrupted, that it has been corrupted; that the unfaithfulness of the

Protestant translations is notorious, not only for the multitude, but the grossness of their infidelities: how then can he assert upon the evidence of his senses," (which he never did,) " that the *Bible* is *the word of God*, which is immutable, and not subject to variation? 'Heaven and earth shall pass away,' says our Saviour, 'but my word shall not pass away.' We have the evidence of our senses that the translations of the Bible by Protestants vary with each other, and in many places even to the perverting of the meaning: by *what* means then, I call upon my adversary to state, is *he* enabled to prove that the Bible is the word of God, according to the *evidence of his senses?* How can *he* verify the genuine from the adulterated version?" (This is another question, artfully thrown in to lead away the reader's mind from the main point, about how we come to know the Bible to be the word of God.) " He says, the apostles committed the word of God to *writing*, because their living voice could not reach the millions of men scattered over the face of the earth, and therefore they were inspired to write the *whole* truth of God for the salvation of sinners, and the edification of those who, by means of it, should be saved from their sins. This word, thus written, *they threw* upon the world. Now, the concurring testimony of all ages contradicts this assertion of THE

PROTESTANT, as I have shown in my 17th Vindicator, col. 263, by proving that the millions of men scattered over the face of the earth were favoured with the truths of the gospel by the *preaching* of men, who succeeded the apostles in their ministry, and not by the *written* epistles which some of the latter left behind them. But if it was the intention of our Divine Saviour that his word should be thrown promiscuously upon the world, after the death of the apostles, how did it happen that only *five* of them, who were personally chosen by himself, left written documents behind them? Two of the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, were written by men who were not members of the sacred college; and one of them, St. Luke, acknowledges that he wrote from *hearsay*. What evidence, then, has THE PROTESTANT to show other than his bare assertion for the accuracy of his statement? Again, he says, they committed the word to writing, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who guided their pens as he did their tongues, to declare the WHOLE TRUTH of God; and yet one of the apostles, St. John, concludes his Gospel with this truly important declaration, well worthy the consideration of those who contend that *the Bible, and the Bible only*, is their rule of faith, namely, 'There are also *many other things which Jesus did*, the which, if they should *be written every one*, I

suppose that even the *world itself could not contain the books which should be written.*' " *Cath. Vind.* col. 326—328.

I suppose ordinary readers will not be able to perceive what relation these words of the apostle John have to the subject, or why the words which Jesus spoke, and which his apostles wrote, should not be the only rule of faith, in connexion with those of Moses and the prophets, because *all* the things which Jesus *did* were not written down.

Papists maintain that we do not know the Bible to be the word of God, but upon the testimony of the church of Rome: but this church is so much given to lying, that I would question the truth of anything that was made to rest upon her sole authority. Liars are suspected even when they speak the truth; and if the authenticity of the sacred writings depended upon the assertion of the church of Rome, I suspect there are many who would reject them on that account alone, without inquiring into the merits, or considering the excellence, of the writings themselves. This, however, would not be fair. The writings of the apostles were possessed by the churches in general at a very early period. The church of Rome, like other churches, came into the possession of them; and it is granted that she preserved them in a Latin version, locked up from the view of the profane vulgar, for several hundred years. Some of her refractory

children, such as Wickliffe and Luther, compelled her at last to acknowledge that she had such writings in her possession. They had seen them; they began to give versions of them in the language of the common people; and the church at last was obliged to bring them out to public view, but, at first, in a Latin version only, with an authoritative canon, declaring this to be equal to the Greek original. And, from the circumstance of having been so long in the undisturbed possession of the book, she began to claim it as her own, and so gave it out as her own; and hence it is that she now pretends to dictate with supreme authority with regard to its meaning, and even whether it be the word of God or not.

This reminds me of what was remarked of Phebe in my last number. She is said to have been the bearer of the epistle which Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome. Now, supposing she had kept the epistle in her own possession for a great number of years, and had at last, in her old age, after Paul was dead, brought it forth to public view; and supposing she had insisted upon the believers in Rome receiving it upon her bare word, what does the reader suppose would have been the consequence? The Christians would probably have felt very indignant; they would have expressed great displeasure against the said Phebe, for having kept them

so long in the dark with regard to such a valuable document; and they would, perhaps, have told her that she had done so ill, by keeping back the letter, that they would not take her bare word for anything. They take the letter, however; they examine the seal, and the handwriting of Tertius, with whom some of them had been acquainted, and the handwriting of Paul himself in the salutation, which was his token in every epistle; and, above all, they examine the contents, and compare them with other writings of the same apostle, and with what they had heard from his own mouth; they unanimously conclude that the epistle is the genuine production of him whose name it bears, and they receive it as such. Phebé might boast that it had been received on her sole authority; but this would have exposed her to the derision of every Christian in Rome, and would have rendered her own Christianity somewhat doubtful. Now, admitting the highest that the church of Rome can justly claim on this subject, she was merely, for a time, one of the depositaries of the Scriptures; and when she was pleased, or rather compelled, to bring them forth to public view, she could add nothing to their authority, any more than the bearer of a letter can add to the authority of its contents, of the authenticity of which the person addressed is, on other grounds, perfectly satisfied.

These remarks, I hope, will be considered a sufficient reply to what Papists advance with regard to their church being invested with the power of deciding infallibly what is, and what is not, the word of God. If they could show that the church of Rome had received some special grant of authority on this subject, from the Head of the church, it would become every Christian to submit to it: but as nothing of the kind has been shown, I shall continue to consider the decision of the church of Rome of no more weight than the opinion of Jack or Tom, or any self-sufficient pedant who may pretend to understand all mysteries, and to possess all knowledge.

The works to which I referred in my last number prove, in the most convincing manner, according to the laws of moral and literary evidence, that the Holy Scriptures are what they profess to be; namely, the testimony of God, conveyed to men by the ministry of his accredited ambassadors. The arguments of such authors are sufficient to silence every objector; to prevail upon every candid mind to give the Bible a fair hearing, by perusing it with serious attention: and if this does not lead to an acknowledgment that it is the word of God, the failure will be found to arise, not from the want of evidence, but from a certain indisposition of the mind and heart, by which many disqualify themselves from attending to the evidence

which is presented. And it is possible for a man to be overcome by such evidence, so far as to acknowledge the Bible to be the word of God—to have a rational conviction that it is what it professes to be—and yet, in an evangelical sense, not to "know the truth;" or be able to satisfy others, or even himself, when he is required to say upon what grounds he *knows* the Bible to be the word of God. The Catholic Vindicator seems to believe that no man can know this, unless he were to receive a Bible directly from the hand of his Maker,or see the Holy Spirit guide the pens of the men that wrote it. It is not probable that anything that I can write will have much weight with such men as he; but, for the information of others, I shall proceed to show how any man may, and how every Christian does, know the Bible to be the word of God, independently of the authority of any man, or of any church, in the world.

Men are the offspring of God, and his workmanship; and he has endowed them with certain faculties, by which they are enabled to perceive his work where it appears before their eyes, or is presented to their minds. I grant that by sin these faculties have become extremely depraved, insomuch, that it is doubtful whether they would be able, without revelation, to discover, from the works of creation, that there is a God. It is true, indeed, that most, if not all the

savage tribes that have yet been discovered have some rude notions of a Supreme Being, who made all things; but no man can say how much this is the effect of traditionary communication, handed down from age to age. This tradition may have sprung originally from a Divine revelation, the light of which was not suffered to be entirely extinguished among the heathen: and where it existed in the faintest degree men would acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being, and regard the works of creation as a proof of it, though they should not have been able by means of them to make the original discovery.

Be this as it may, I consider myself entitled to take advantage of the enlightened state of society with which it is my happiness to be connected, and within the sphere of which this controversy is carried on. No man can apply his mind to the study of astronomy, or any branch of natural science taught in our schools, without perceiving abundant demonstration of the existence of a Supreme Intelligence—a Being of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power; insomuch that it is reasonably doubted whether there be such a creature as a speculative atheist in the kingdom. Now, I do not hesitate to affirm, that if any man will apply himself as honestly and sincerely to the study of the Scriptures, as scientific men apply themselves

to the study of science, he will find the Bible demonstrate itself to be the word of God, as clearly as the solar system demonstrates itself to be the work of God. By honesty and sincerity in this connexion, I mean, that persons applying themselves to the study of the Bible be no more indisposed to the knowledge which the Bible teaches, than they are to that which astronomy teaches: in other words, that they be ready to give as cordial a reception to the truth in the one case as in the other.

I am aware that such an honest, sincere, favourable disposition of mind towards what the Bible teaches does not universally, or even generally, exist with men who are favourably enough disposed towards what natural science teaches. Creation presents the Divine Being in certain characters or attributes: the Bible presents him under the very same characters, with the addition of certain others, which do not appear from the works of creation. Now, when the human mind comes into contact with those attributes which are exhibited in the Bible only, it feels such an opposition to its own state and character as to be hurt and offended; and, in thousands of instances, repelled from the study of a subject so disagreeable. It will be understood that I am speaking of the human mind as a *carnal mind*. How it became such is not the present question. I stop not here to show that it is

so naturally. I claim only to have it admitted, which I think none will deny, that men in general are *practically* carnal; that is, they are sinners: and having this conceded, I plead the fact of a certain innate revolting of the human mind against those traits of the Divine character which are discovered only in the Bible, as a proof that the Bible has proceeded from a pure and holy Being—from a Being whose character is the reverse of what we see to be the character of carnal men, that is, from God himself: and thus we come to know that the Bible is the word of God, from the circumstance of its being the very thing which, above all others, provokes the enmity of the carnal mind.

I grant that this is not an argument calculated to impress the mind of an untutored savage; and perhaps it may have little weight with our almost equally untutored Papists. But I consider myself as addressing wise men, who are able to judge of what I say. Suppose, then, I am in possession of a cabinet of the most curious workmanship; that I alone, as I suppose, am in possession of the key, that the wards of the lock are so complicated that I can defy the world to open it; and that, in fact, it is found impossible to gain access to it without the real key:—I have not said or supposed from whom I received this cabinet, but merely supposed it in my possession. Suppose then, farther,

that a stranger comes to me, with a key in his hand that opens it at once, and that he tells me that he received the key from the very person who made the cabinet and constructed the lock, I feel myself constrained to believe the testimony of this stranger; his report brings with it such evidence that no reasonable man can refuse to yield to it.

Now, without pursuing the figure further, I affirm that this cabinet is my own heart. I defy the whole world to have access to it, or to know what is in it; but when I read the Bible, I find it tells me what is in my heart. I know then that He who made the cabinet made also the key: in other words, that the Author of my being is the Author of the Bible. The woman whom Christ met at the well in Samaria, argued upon the most philosophical and rational principles, when she said, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" She had been reminded of certain events in her own history, which she believed no living creature knew; hence, she was constrained to acknowledge the Divine inspiration of the Person who had honoured her with an interview. Upon the same principle, any man who will carefully apply his mind to the reading of the Scriptures, will find them "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." They will tell him what is in his heart, and thus prove themselves to

be the word of God. If Mr. Andrews shall say, that this is nothing to him; that it does not convince him that the Bible is the word of God; I have only to reply, that his conviction is not the work which I undertook. The question was not how *he* might know, but how *I* know, the Bible to be the word of God. I have here told him a part, and I shall tell him more before I have done: and if he does not shut his eyes against the truth, he may know it as well as I.

Independently of the saving knowledge of the truth of Divine revelation, which is the effect of a Divine influence on the heart, and which can be produced by nothing short of this influence — there are certain rational considerations which may, and ought to produce a rational conviction of the truth. On this subject, I gladly avail myself of a passage in the introduction to a pamphlet just published, by Thomas Erskine, esq., advocate, entitled, "Remarks on the Internal Evidence of the Truth of Revealed Religion." I have never met with any work that comprises, in so small a compass, so complete an answer to the question which I am attempting to answer; namely, How we know the Bible to be the word of God. If any of my readers shall be induced, from this short recommendation, to procure and read the work, I am persuaded they will thank me for it.*

* There is an excellent work by Dr. Owen on the same

As a specimen of his mode of illustration, and as bearing directly upon the point in hand, I quote the following:—

"When we are once convinced of the existence of a cause, and are acquainted with its ordinary mode of operation, we are prepared to give a certain degree of credit to a history of other effects attributed to it, provided we can trace the connexion between them. As an illustration of this, I shall suppose, that the steam-engine, and the application of it to the movement of vessels, was known in China in the days of Archimedes; and that a foolish lying traveller had found his way from Sicily to China, and had there seen an exhibition of a steam-boat, and had been admitted to examine the mechanical apparatus of it; and, upon his return home, had, among many palpable fables, related the true particulars of this exhibition; what feeling would this relation have probably excited in his audience? The fact itself was a strange one, and different in appearance from any thing with which they were acquainted: it was also associated with other stories that seemed to have falsehood stamped on the very face of them. What means, then, had the hearers

subject, entitled, "The Reason of Faith in the Holy Scriptures;" of which an edition was published in Glasgow, in 1800. Like the other writings of that eminent divine—indeed, like most writings of his age—this work wants compression; but it will richly repay the labour of a patient reading.

of distinguishing the true from the false? Some of the rabble might probably give a stupid and wondering kind of credit to the whole; whilst the judicious but unscientific hearers would reject the whole. Now, supposing the relation had come to the ears of Archimedes, and that he had sent for the man, and interrogated him; and, from his unorderly and unscientific, but accurate specification of boilers, and cylinders, and pipes, and furnaces, and wheels, had drawn out the mechanical theory of the steam-boat—he might have told his friends, 'The traveller may be a liar, but this is a truth. I have a stronger evidence for it than his testimony, or the testimony of any man: it is a truth in the nature of things. The effect which the man has described is the legitimate and certain result of the apparatus which he has described. If he has fabricated this account he must be a great philosopher. At all events, his narrative is founded on an unquestionable general truth.'" *Pages* 2, 3.

The application of this to the point in hand is extremely easy. Archimedes was a mathematician. He was acquainted with the operation, and could comprehend the result of certain mechanical powers. There were many things connected with mechanics which he did not know, for they were not discovered for ages after his time: but supposing them to have been discovered, and reported to him,

he was in the knowledge of certain fundamental truths, which enabled him to decide, with infallible certainty, that certain causes put into operation, would produce certain effects: and supposing him to have received information of certain results which he had not thought of before, but demonstrably proceeding from established principles, he would believe the report, independently of the character of the medium through which it was conveyed to him. If the reporter were an honest man, he might, if he pleased, throw the weight of this into the scale of evidence; but it would add nothing to the fulness of his conviction.

Now, there are fundamental principles in morals and religion, believed by those who understand them, as firmly as any mathematical truth whatever. They are not demonstrated to the eye by visible representations, but the impression of their truth upon the mind is as distinct as if they were. One of these principles is, that a pure and perfect system of legislation cannot proceed from an impure source. Suppose, then, a man as well acquainted with the law laid down in the Bible, and the whole procedure of the lawgiver therein related, as Archimedes was with the mechanical powers, (and surely there are many men in the world of whom this may be predicated)—such a man would most undoubtedly conclude and declare, that this is a

system that could not emanate from the father of lies: that being a system of perfect purity and equity, it must have proceeded from the Father of lights, whose word it professes to be. Suppose he is told that this book was concealed for many ages by the church of Rome; that now she has allowed it to see the light, because she has been compelled to do so; that she says we must believe its authenticity upon her bare word, for we can have no higher authority for it; and that she has practised so many impositions upon the world, and told so many lies, that we ought to be cautious with regard to what she tells us, and look upon this book with some degree of jealousy;—suppose all these things to be objected against the Bible, the intelligent student of its contents would reply, I do not care a straw for what the church of Rome may say either for or against this book; it proves itself to be of Divine origin by its incomparable purity, sublimity, and harmony. It is, in short, the very thing that such a corrupt and impure body as the church of Rome would wish to keep out of view, because it testified against her impurities: and the fact of her having concealed it until its publication was extorted from her, is an evidence that there is a divinity in it with which her carnality did not choose to come into visible contact.

After all, the knowledge of which I am

speaking must be matter of individual consciousness. Every Christian must know experimentally that the Bible is the word of God, else he cannot enjoy the peace and comfort which it imparts to all who really know the truth. The sun in the heavens is known only by his own light; and He who made the sun is known only by his. The Holy Scriptures are that light by which alone God makes himself known as the Saviour of sinners; and by the illumination of his Spirit, he makes the light of his word as evident to the heart and conscience of them that believe, as the light of the sun is to them that see.

When a sinner becomes seriously concerned about his character, state, and prospects; and when, in such a state of mind, he reads the Bible, he finds, at first, that it is all against him: by the holy law of God he is convicted and condemned; and he is conscious of a power and divinity in the word of condemnation, that makes him *feel* that it is the word of God. But the Holy Ghost, who has thus convinced him of sin, may be graciously pleased to convince him also of righteousness; that is, by the gospel, show him the way of salvation, which is fully made known in the Scriptures. The sinner so convinced will recognise this to be the word of God, for he perceives in it that which answers the demands of the law, which condemned him. There is a power also in this word that proves

itself to be Divine. It removes the sentence of condemnation; and he who was before under a fearful apprehension of suffering the punishment of his sins, sees now all his sins taken away by the sufferings of the Divine Saviour, as related in the Holy Scriptures.

From this there arises a peace and joy in believing, of which no unbeliever can have any conception. It is a matter of individual consciousness. A Christian, under the broadest possible view of his own guilt, and with the fullest conviction that God hates sin with a perfect hatred, is yet enabled, under the influence of the gospel, to enjoy perfect peace even in the prospect of death, judgment, and eternity, because he knows that Christ hath made peace by the blood of his cross. This he enjoys as his own peace; he has a personal individual interest in it. This is conveyed to his mind by the word of the gospel; and this he knows to be the word of God, from the effect which it produces in him, and has upon him in the whole tenor of his life and conversation.

That must be of God which is the instrument of making men like God; that is, which turns them from sin to holiness. Every sinner who has been so turned from his sins unto God, possesses a consciousness of the power of the word, which weighs more in his mind than a thousand arguments drawn from the external evidence of the truth of the Bible.

His consciousness will not be held as sufficient evidence to others that the Bible is the word of God; but if he was formerly a notoriously wicked person, and if he is now a sober and holy man, devoting his time and talents to the good of his fellow creatures and the glory of God; and if it is manifest that the change was produced by the Bible, every candid person who shall know the fact, will be constrained to acknowledge, that truly the Bible is the word of God. I have put this case hypothetically, but there are many Christians alive whose history would demonstrate the fact that I mean to establish; namely, that the Bible proves itself to be the word of God, by affording peace to the troubled conscience; by teaching and enabling men to forsake a life of sin, and to live a holy life, and to rest in the full assurance of a blessed immortality.

ADDENDA (C.)

I KNOW that Papists disclaim idol worship, and that they do so with the most bitter cursing, of which W. D. has given a specimen from Gother's "Papist Misrepresented and Represented;" but this is no more than heathens do, except the cursing part of the disavowal, which, I suppose, is peculiarly popish. No man professes to worship an

idol, believing it to be an idol, but because he believes a divinity to reside in it, or that it is itself a divinity. Every man who worships a creature is an idolater; and he is not the less so, because he believes it to be the Creator; and though he should pronounce ever so many curses against idol worshippers.

My correspondent proceeds upon a mistake, into which he, and, I suppose, all his brethren, have fallen—that the church which Christ purchased with his blood, and of which he promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against her, is the visible organized church of Rome. This they all seem to take for granted; but it is a mere assumption, without a shadow of reason to support it. The church of Christ are the redeemed of all nations and of all ages; and the gates of hell shall never prevail so as to prevent the salvation of any one of them. Those of them who are upon earth are scattered among a number of visible organized bodies, which, in an inferior sense, are called churches. The church in Rome was one of these, while she held the true faith and pure worship, as instituted by Christ; but in her purest state she had no superiority over other churches; she never had any right to call herself, by way of eminence, much less exclusively, *the church*. Christ never gave to her, or to any national, provincial, or particular church, a promise that the gates of hell should not prevail

against it; but he gave warning to all, that, if they departed from the faith, they should be cut off. This has been notoriously the case with Rome; and though she retains the name of Christian, she has become the reverse of what the name implies; and is conspicuously the place where Satan has his seat.

In short, the promise of Christ holds out no security to either churches or individuals. but in the way of persevering in faith and holy practice. Christ said to his disciples, on one occasion, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," Luke xii. 32. Now, if Judas had argued as Papists do, he needed not to have thought himself in danger of perdition, though he had betrayed his Lord. He might have said, If Christ's word be true, I am sure of the kingdom of heaven. But Judas had not the presumption to reason like modern Papists. He apostatized, and he perished; yet Christ spoke the truth, and his word will be verified in the salvation of all true disciples. The church of Rome also apostatized; and though Christ promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against *his* church, he has suffered them to prevail against that of Rome. He has removed the candlestick, that is, the branch of his church that was once in Rome, out of the place, as he did to many other churches, for the same reason. Of some, indeed, the memory is perished

from the earth; but for reasons known fully to himself alone, he suffered the church of Rome to retain a name and a visible form, after the spirit was gone, and to become the antitype of Babylon, the oppressor and persecutor of the church of God.

To know that a church is in error, it is not necessary to prove when, and by whom, the error was first broached; yet W. D. seems to express great triumph, because nobody can tell who said the first mass. Had he been a servant of the husbandman, in whose field tares had been sown, and had sprung up, he would not have believed that tares were in the field, though he saw them with his own eyes, unless somebody could tell who sowed them. To the master, and the wise servants, it appeared that the tares were sown while they were off their guard, and that it was the work of an enemy. This was evident from the actual state of the field, though they could tell no more about it. So the church of Rome is now full of errors, though it be not easy to fix the precise time, or to name the persons by whom they were all introduced. She has departed from the unerring standard; she is many degrees distant from it; we are therefore sure that she has erred, though we should not be able to tell who made the first wry step.

My correspondent, W. D., refuses to admit that the church of Rome is in any error, be-

cause no Protestant can tell him who was the first that erred, or who said the first mass: to which I have replied, that we found her far removed from the unerring standard; and that, therefore, we were sure that she had erred, though we could not tell who made the first wry step. I shall illustrate this by the following incident:—

I happened to be in Greenock a few weeks ago, in a very foggy night, when some gentlemen hired a boat to ferry them over to Helensburgh. They could not see above ten yards round them, and they had no compass. The men rowed with all their might for about two hours, when they made land, supposing it to be Helensburgh; but it turned out to be Cartsdyke, on the Greenock side of the river, and not half a mile distant from the place from which they started. Now, had W. D. been one of the company, he must, according to his mode of reasoning, have maintained that Cartsdyke was Helensburgh, unless somebody could tell which of the rowers had gained so upon the other, as insensibly to turn about the boat. But the sensible part of the company, seeing how matters stood, would confess that they had erred from their course, though they could not tell who gave the first stroke of the oar that led them astray.

In the thick and long-continued darkness of Europe, it is not surprising that the great body of the people went astray from the

truth, and wandered in the mazes of error. Indeed, it could not have been otherwise, without a perpetual miracle. But W. D. will admit of no error having been broached, unless we can produce a distinct record of its introduction; while the very darkness which facilitated the propagation of error, rendered it difficult, if not impossible, in many instances, to preserve such record: yet this writer most confidently assures us, that "there is no heresy whatever, nor any point of discipline that is, or ever was, practised in the church of Rome, or any other church whatever, but what is recorded by some historian; but we have no such records of the supposed errors of the church of Rome." It is impossible that W. D. can know what he asserts in the first part of this sentence without inspiration; therefore we may let this pass till he shall make it appear that he is possessed of the gift: and as for the errors of the church of Rome, we have enough on record to show us when some of the principal ones came to be publicly acknowledged as what is called Catholic doctrine. This is well known to every reader of church history, but I am afraid I cannot rank W. D. among the number. Let him read Milner's Church History, or even his own Dupin, and he will see reason enough to be "reconverted back again."

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